

having taken this risk, because the easiest thing to have done with his lead in the polls would be to play it safe, to just ride it out, to take into account "Clinton fatigue" or whatever else might enter into this election, and to bring honesty to the White House. But, instead, he has taken a bold step on this, and I am really proud that we have a candidate who has brought this to the debate, because I am sure this is going to be a major focus of debate in every presidential debate.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely correct. The first step we have to take is, I used to practice law, and when you put on a defense, I did not do any criminal law, but even when you put on any kind of defense, it has to have some credibility. How can you stand up and credibly defend the current system that we have? How can you look at the young workers and how can the vice president and his policies and his policy for Social Security, how can he look at the women of the country or young workers and say I am going to defend the status quo, I am going to defend the current system?

You know what, it does not sell. It is not credible. I urge both sides of the aisle to get together and at least have enough courage to say, because we are beneficiaries of it, we get to use the Thrift Savings Program, that we at least have enough courage to stand out there and say, you know, what is wrong with looking at change? What is wrong with trying to suggest some improvements for the Social Security system? What is wrong with doing like Federal employees, all the Federal employees get to do, and that is personalize their accounts? What is wrong with standing up and figuring out, hey, there is a better way to do it?

We are not saying dump this system. We are saying improve this system. We are certainly not saying, as the gentleman has said, we are not saying threaten anybody currently on the system. Not at all. In fact, I think most people we talk to out there want us to improve the system. They want a system like every one of us sitting in this hall tonight are benefits of, a Thrift Savings Program. We get personalized choices, and yet we have a safety net back there. We have an obligation I think to offer this across the country. Every Federal employee gets it. What is wrong with offering it to other people?

In conclusion, I would first of all thank the gentleman for joining me this evening and look forward to further discussions with him. Number two, I think this is a very good topic for the presidential debates, because I think our next President has got to take a leadership role and put this system on a track that improves it, that puts it on a system that our young people, and even people our age, are not talking or have a fear that Social Security will not be there for them. We want a President that will give those

people the comfort that that system will be there for them.

So far, frankly, so far the only candidate that has stepped out there and said "I think I have got the system different than the status quo" is Governor George Bush of the State of Texas.

Again, I thank my colleague for his participation this evening.

TOLERANCE OF TORTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if a bill were to come before this Congress asking for the legalization of rape, torture, murder and religious persecution, it would be voted down without question. If our President were to lower the working age to 15 years old and call for 14 hour workdays, 6 days a week, the people of the United States would be outraged.

Why then do so many in this Congress seek to allow trade practices with a country that allows and encourages such atrocities? In the People's Republic of China, these types of events occur every day. This behavior is not punished by the Chinese Communist Party, but it is condoned and encouraged by this Chinese government.

Although the government of the United States obviously has no authority to stop directly this abusive behavior, we do have the ability to check on the human rights practices of the Chinese through our current trade agreement.

The U.S. State Department reports on human rights violations in China, "Beijing's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the year, as the government intensified efforts to suppress dissent." Even with our investigations into the human rights issue, China has not changed. Even if we do not consider the \$70 billion trade deficit or the threat of jobs going overseas to China, we should deny China permanent normal trade relations based on these human rights violations done and allowed by the Chinese government.

Many of the victims of government oppression in China are young children. Two of the main concerns of many U.S. citizens regarding trade with China are child labor and working conditions for all Chinese, especially young women. Chinese are used as cheap labor, often forced to work in awful conditions for abnormally long hours. They are often punished cruelly. Many are tortured brutally, some are raped by their employers.

The Chinese government acknowledges the use of child labor, and while the exact number of child workers is unknown, the number of minors out of school and in the workforce exceeds by far 10 million young people. Companies looking for cheap labor attract apprehensive students with promises of money and success. These children are

forced to work in cramped spaces for long hours. Fourteen-year-olds often faint from exhaustion and heat, often working 6 days a week, 16 hours a day.

Not only do the Chinese practice and allow child labor, slave labor is also common in labor camps throughout China. Chinese citizens are kidnapped, they are forced to work, often without wages or food. These workers, often very young, often 40 of them or more, are forced to stay in makeshift houses of less than 20 square meters, with leaking roofs and rat infestation.

If the U.S. allows China to obtain PNTR, then we are accepting the outrageous treatment of laborers in China. Can we in good conscience allow this to happen in this Congress?

One of the founding principles of the United States is freedom from religious persecution. Under communist rule in China, all religious activity must be approved and registered by the government. Religious sects not approved by the government include the Falun Gong and Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese government has fought hard to restrict both these sects. According to the Students for a Free Tibet Organization, 6,000 Tibetan monasteries and shrines have been destroyed, 600 Tibetan Buddhists are presently in jail for practicing their religion. The Chinese government banned the Falun Gong in July and put tens of thousands of its members in psychiatric hospitals and in prisons for long, long terms. Prisoners are endlessly harassed, beaten and tortured. Often the Chinese government uses hospital and prisons to silence the spiritual leaders of their country.

Not only are the spiritual leaders detained and imprisoned, but so are political party leaders. China continues to harass Taiwan with threats of bombing, simply because they held free elections and are now a Democratic Nation.

The Chinese government attempts to squelch freedom and democracy, the two basic ideals on which our country was founded. Why are we willing to throw away these ideals because of corporate greed by U.S. CEOs? If the U.S. allows China to have permanent normal trade relations, we are condoning China's outrageous denial of human rights. We would not ignore this type of criminal behavior in our own country; we should not ignore these atrocities in China.

We cannot turn our backs on the Chinese people simply because they do not inhabit our shores. We should expect no less from the countries with whom we trade than we do from ourselves. If we want to have a global economy, we should have a global morality. Can we allow the trafficking of women and children in the name of western corporate profit? Can we condone discrimination and abuse against women and minorities for profit?

Mr. Speaker, free trade with China will prove to be very costly for our values, for democracy and for our Nation.