

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS TO VIETNAM

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5602) to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Vietnam, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5602

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In July 1995, President Bill Clinton announced the formal normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam.

(2) Vietnam has taken cooperative steps with the United States under the United States Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (formerly the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting) established in 1992 by President George H.W. Bush to provide the fullest possible accounting of MIA and POW cases.

(3) In 2000, the United States and Vietnam concluded a bilateral trade agreement that included commitments on goods, services, intellectual property rights, and investment. The agreement was approved by joint resolution enacted pursuant to section 405(c) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2435(c)), and entered into force in December 2001.

(4) Since 2001, normal trade relations treatment has consistently been extended to Vietnam pursuant to title IV of the Trade Act of 1974.

(5) Vietnam has undertaken significant market-based economic reforms, including the reduction of government subsidies, tariffs and nontariff barriers, and extensive legal reform. These measures have dramatically improved Vietnam's business and investment climate.

(6) Vietnam is in the process of acceding to the World Trade Organization. On May 31, 2006, the United States and Vietnam signed a comprehensive bilateral agreement providing greater market access for goods and services and other trade liberalizing commitments as part of the World Trade Organization accession process.

SEC. 2. TERMINATION OF APPLICATION OF TITLE IV OF THE TRADE ACT OF 1974 TO VIETNAM.

(a) PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATIONS AND EXTENSION OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT.—Notwithstanding any provision of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2431 et seq.), the President may—

(1) determine that such title should no longer apply to Vietnam; and

(2) after making a determination under paragraph (1) with respect to Vietnam, proclaim the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of that country.

(b) TERMINATION OF THE APPLICABILITY OF TITLE IV.—On and after the effective date of the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment to the products of Vietnam under subsection (a), title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 shall cease to apply to that country.

SEC. 3. PROCEDURE FOR DETERMINING PROHIBITED SUBSIDIES BY VIETNAM.

(a) AUTHORITY OF TRADE REPRESENTATIVE.—The Trade Representative may conduct proceedings under this section to determine whether the Government of Vietnam is providing, on or after the date on which

Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization, a prohibited subsidy to its textile or apparel industry, if such proceedings are begun, and consultations under section 4(a) are initiated, during the 1-year period beginning on the date on which Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization.

(b) PETITIONS.—

(1) FILING.—Any interested person may file a petition with the Trade Representative requesting that the Trade Representative make a determination under subsection (a). The petition shall set forth the allegations in support of the request.

(2) REVIEW BY TRADE REPRESENTATIVE.—The Trade Representative shall review the allegations in any petition filed under paragraph (1) and, not later than 20 days after the date on which the Trade Representative receives the petition, shall determine whether to initiate proceedings to make a determination under subsection (a).

(3) PROCEDURES.—

(A) DETERMINATION TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS.—If the Trade Representative makes an affirmative determination under paragraph (2) with respect to a petition, the Trade Representative shall publish a summary of the petition in the Federal Register and notice of the initiation of proceedings under this section.

(B) DETERMINATION NOT TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS.—If the Trade Representative determines not to initiate proceedings with respect to a petition, the Trade Representative shall inform the petitioner of the reasons therefor and shall publish notice of the determination, together with a summary of those reasons, in the Federal Register.

(c) INITIATION OF PROCEEDINGS BY OTHER MEANS.—If the Trade Representative determines, in the absence of a petition, that proceedings should be initiated under this section, the Trade Representative shall publish in the Federal Register that determination, together with the reasons therefor, and notice of the initiation of proceedings under this section.

SEC. 4. CONSULTATIONS UPON INITIATION OF INVESTIGATION.

If the Trade Representative initiates a proceeding under subsection (b)(3)(A) or (c) of section 3, the Trade Representative, on behalf of the United States, shall, on the day on which notice thereof is published under the applicable subsection, so notify the Government of Vietnam and request consultations with that government regarding the subsidy.

SEC. 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION.

(a) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—In the notice published under subsection (b)(3)(A) or (c) of section 3, the Trade Representative shall provide an opportunity to the public for the presentation of views concerning the issues—

(1) within the 30-day period beginning on the date of the notice (or on a date after such period if agreed to by the petitioner), or

(2) at such other time if a timely request therefor is made by the petitioner or by any interested person, with a public hearing if requested by an interested person.

(b) CONSULTATION.—The Trade Representative shall consult with the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, and with the appropriate advisory committees established under section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155), with respect to whether to initiate proceedings under section 3 and, if proceedings are conducted, with respect to making the determination under subsection (c).

(c) DETERMINATION.—After considering all comments submitted, and within 30 days

after the close of the comment period under subsection (a), the Trade Representative shall determine whether the Government of Vietnam is providing, on or after the date on which Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization, a prohibited subsidy to its textile or apparel industry. The Trade Representative shall publish that determination in the Federal Register, together with the justification for the determination.

(d) RECORD.—The Trade Representative shall make available to the public a complete record of all nonconfidential information presented in proceedings conducted under this section, together with a summary of confidential information so submitted.

SEC. 6. ARBITRATION AND IMPOSITION OF QUOTAS.

(a) ARBITRATION.—If, within 60 days after consultations are requested under section 4, in a case in which the Trade Representative makes an affirmative determination under section 5(c), the matter in dispute is not resolved, the Trade Representative shall request arbitration of the matter under the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

(b) IMPOSITION OF QUOTAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Trade Representative shall impose, for a period of not more than 1 year, the quantitative limitations described in paragraph (2) on textile and apparel products of Vietnam—

(A) if, pursuant to arbitration under subsection (a), the arbitrator determines that the Government of Vietnam is providing, on or after the date on which Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization, a prohibited subsidy to its textile or apparel industry; or

(B) if the arbitrator does not issue a decision within 120 days after the request for arbitration, in which case the limitations cease to be effective if the arbitrator, after such limitations are imposed, determines that the Government of Vietnam is not providing, on or after the date on which Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization, a prohibited subsidy to its textile or apparel industry.

(2) LIMITATIONS DESCRIBED.—The quantitative limitations referred to in paragraph (1) are those quantitative limitations that were in effect under the Bilateral Textile Agreement during the most recent full calendar year in which the Bilateral Textile Agreement was in effect.

(c) DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.—If, after imposing quantitative limitations under subsection (b) because of a prohibited subsidy, the Trade Representative determines that the Government of Vietnam is not providing, on or after the date on which Vietnam accedes to the World Trade Organization, a prohibited subsidy to its textile or apparel industry, the quantitative limitations shall cease to be effective on the date on which that determination is made.

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BILATERAL TEXTILE AGREEMENT.—The term "Bilateral Textile Agreement" means the Agreement Relating to Trade in Cotton, Wool, Man-Made Fiber, Non-Cotton Vegetable Fiber and Silk Blend Textiles and Textile Products Between the Governments of the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, entered into on July 17, 2003.

(2) DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING.—The term "Dispute Settlement Understanding" means the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes referred to in section 101(d)(16) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(16)).

(3) INTERESTED PERSON.—The term "interested person" includes, but is not limited to,

domestic firms and workers, representatives of consumer interests, United States product exporters, and any industrial user of any goods or services that may be affected by action taken under section 6(b).

(4) PROHIBITED SUBSIDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “prohibited subsidy” means a subsidy described in article 3.1 of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

(B) SUBSIDY.—The term “subsidy” means a subsidy within the meaning of article 1.1 of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

(C) AGREEMENT ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING MEASURES.—The term “Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures” means the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures referred to in section 101(d)(12) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(12)).

(5) TEXTILE OR APPAREL PRODUCT.—The term “textile or apparel product” means a good listed in the Annex to the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing referred to in section 101(d)(4) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(4)).

(6) TRADE REPRESENTATIVE.—The term “Trade Representative” means the United States Trade Representative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5602 was a bill that was introduced in June of this year by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) and principally the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON). This is the culmination of a long and sometimes very difficult process.

The relationships between the United States and Vietnam have been difficult. When I was a member of the committee as a member of the minority and the chairman of the Trade Subcommittee was the gentleman from Nevada, Mr. GIBBONS, we traveled to Vietnam as the first official United States Delegation on Trade. That was a number of years ago. So we arrive today after an 11-year effort in working with Vietnam to enjoy the announcement that Vietnam is on the verge of joining the World Trade Organization.

Vietnam joining the WTO will bring substantial economic benefits obviously to the Vietnamese and to the United States, because Vietnam has agreed to open its markets to U.S. goods and services. However, to fully benefit from this move on the part of Vietnam to the World Trade Organization, the United States must first extend the so-called permanent normal trade relationship to Vietnam, and that is what this bill does.

I asked to take it up with the “as amended” phrase attached because we have been able to come to an agreement. One of the real concerns with an increase in trade between the United States and Vietnam is the textile industry. We have concerns about those areas in the United States that still

have an ability to provide and afford the production of textiles and the relationship we are going to continue to grow with Central America with the free trade agreement there and with the pending free trade agreements with Andean countries that will provide us with an excellent opportunity to move our raw and partially finished textile products to an area that will both advance those countries and the United States.

Vietnam will be a major player in the textile industry. The concern we have is in balancing the concerns of those who are on the retail side and those who are on the production side, and we believe that the amendment that we have offered will go a long way toward resolving those concerns.

There is still concern as far as the chairman is concerned and, I know, of other Members on Vietnam's record on human rights and religious freedom. Just because it decides to join the World Trade Organization doesn't mean that it has decided in all aspects to join the world's civilized nations in its behavior not only to its people and to others. However, I do firmly believe that if Vietnam lives up to its commitment in its membership in the World Trade Organization, it will encourage and accelerate the opportunity for needed reforms in a tangible way that impacts the Vietnamese people's lives daily. So although I have a number of reservations in that regard, I do support going forward.

This is a regime that is not a democracy. I do hope as we examine trade relationships that may be presented to this Congress before we adjourn sine die, that we take cognizance of the fact that we have an opportunity to enter into free trade agreements with growing and vibrant democracies in this hemisphere, and if we are anxious to move a trade agreement with a country that is not democratic, that we extend that same courtesy to those in the Western Hemisphere, specifically Peru, that have made significant sacrifices to come to a free trade agreement. They are, after all, a deserving people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I turn the balance of my time over to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the chairman of the Trade Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee, and that he be allowed to yield said time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation because I believe, on balance, Vietnam's accession to the WTO is a positive step. It is a growing economy

with 90 million people. It remains a command economy basically and a one-party state, and that always leads to some concerns and some qualifications. That is true here in terms of some problems, serious ones in the past with human rights, and also some economic issues. However, I think, on balance, it is wise to proceed. Their becoming part of the WTO will mean that the disciplines of international regulations will apply to them.

Let me say, however, I have several concerns. One is that this bill is on the suspension calendar. This bill did not go through committee. There was no hearing. I think this is not a wise procedure. In fact, I am sure it is not a wise procedure, and it is not going to be followed in the future. Bills of this nature, I believe, will have hearings before a committee and will not come up on suspension.

Secondly, a second concern, there is an important omission here and there is no safeguard mechanism in this accession agreement. When nonmarket economies operate, they usually do not do so through the usual mechanisms of supply and demand or international market dynamics, and so it is easier for there to be surges of imports into this country and more difficulty in dealing with them. The Bush administration did not negotiate a general surge provision here nor a textile surge provision. They were both in the China accession agreement. This is a serious omission, or at least an omission that should not be replicated.

For example, there is now negotiation with Russia of an accession agreement. The bilateral has been completed and the multilateral will start. I don't think we should be approving PNTR bills, for example, with Russia, until there is a safeguard mechanism negotiated in the agreement itself.

I believe all of us on this side who are speaking today will be dedicated to making sure that there is such a safeguard mechanism, so that if there is that surge of exports to us, we have a mechanism to deal with it.

On balance, I think it is important to proceed with this bill, and therefore I urge support.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5602 would grant permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam and permit U.S. businesses to take full advantage of the commitments that Vietnam has made as part of its accession into the World Trade Organization.

On November 7, 2006, World Trade Organization members voted to approve Vietnam's entry into the organization and Vietnam is expected to officially become a member by the end of the year. To get to this point, Vietnam has clearly made significant economic reforms and will benefit not only the international community, but also the people of Vietnam.

As part of Vietnam's accession into the World Trade Organization, more

than 94 percent of all U.S. exports of manufactured goods will face duties no higher than 15 percent. Tariffs will also be reduced 15 percent or less on three-quarters of United States agricultural products.

Additionally, U.S. service providers will have increased access to Vietnam's market. My own State of Florida already exports over \$20 million of goods to Vietnam. With Vietnam's entry into the World Trade Organization, I expect this number to grow even higher, thus benefiting those that manufacture, create, grow and harvest these products, as well as those that package, store and transport them.

To say the United States and Vietnam have had a rocky relationship would be a dramatic understatement. Yet, much like with Japan, this opportunity to promote cooperation and conciliation demonstrates the great progress that is important when countries engage economically.

By enacting this legislation, the United States and Vietnam have a unique opportunity to show the world that no matter what the history between these countries may be, they can still have substantial economic and foreign policy benefits when the countries turn away from violent conflict and focus their efforts on economic interaction with an international rule-based system.

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This legislation can provide an important symbolic example to countries throughout the world facing an important choice between violence and isolation or economic prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 5602 and support the efforts of American businesses striving to compete in this new and expanding market.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation granting Vietnam permanent normal trade relations.

Today is a day that shows America really at its best. With one piece of legislation, we will show the world the heart and spirit of our country. In the grand scheme of things, there is not a lot of money involved here, but there is an enormous amount of history and healing involved. Democrats support permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam because granting PNTR to Vietnam allows it to join the rules-based, multilateral trading system, the World Trade Organization. Vietnam's accession to the WTO will ensure that Vietnam is bound to international rules and concessions that aim to provide trade-related economic growth that is fair.

But PNTR does more than just bring Vietnam into a multinational trading relationship. PNTR continues to heal the wounds of a conflict whose wounds

are still felt today. The healing of the Vietnam War continues, and today marks another important step in that process.

The U.S.-Vietnam accession agreement, for the most part, is a strong one. The agreement will open an emerging market of almost 90 million people to American exporters of goods and services. This agreement will provide the Nation's exporters and consumers opportunities which are not available today.

In my home State of Washington, a State that relies heavily on exports to drive its economy, products like computer software, commercial aircraft, and agricultural goods will find better access to an increasingly dynamic economy through this agreement.

Subjecting Vietnam to the disciplines of the WTO and its rules and dispute settlement mechanisms will be a positive step in providing the United States more of an opportunity to ensure that Vietnam's economic reforms continue and move in the right direction. This will provide a new opportunity for the Vietnamese to improve their lives by participating in freer and fair markets. That is what makes this agreement worthy of support despite its flaws.

Even as we move, I hope, to pass this resolution, we must recognize a deeply flawed process by which the resolution is brought before the House. First, this is a major trade bill that is coming to the floor on a suspension calendar, the legislation introduced and made available to the Members and the public just a few hours ago without any significant debate, without any hearing in the committee of jurisdiction, and without the opportunity of any markup. I doubt most Members know anything about this bill, which was introduced just a few hours ago, as most Members are presently flying back from their districts across the country.

This is not the way the Congress should operate when we are legislating on matters of importance to the American people. We should follow the regular order, and I am hopeful that in the future we will do that. In fact, I am absolutely certain we will do that, having listened to Mr. LEVIN talk about it.

In fact, the bill, and Vietnam's accession agreement to the WTO, omits a critically important provision. The Bush administration failed once again to negotiate a safeguard mechanism with Vietnam, which is a country with a nonmarket economy. This is a major oversight. Nonmarket economies do not respond to normal market signals of supply and demand, and thereby they often create surplus supply that can lead to import surges in the U.S. market. These surges, and this administration's failure to address them effectively, are one of the areas in which the Bush administration has failed to stand up for American businesses, for their workers and the manufacturing sector in general.

In the new Congress, the House of Representatives and the Committee on

Ways and Means will need to consider ways that our trade law remedies can be updated and strengthened, including the antidumping laws. American firms are among the most competitive in the world, but they cannot compete with the treasury of foreign countries. The administration should know that in the new Congress; the new majority will insist that the administration incorporate safeguard tools in future PNTR agreements.

In closing, I support this bill because it is an important step that we should take to strengthen the multilateral trading system. It is an important step to provide opportunities for American and Vietnamese workers and entrepreneurs. Most importantly, this is a step we can take to improve U.S.-Vietnamese relations and our relationship with emerging Asian economies. It is unfortunate that the agreement has some key shortcomings that my colleagues on the House Ways and Means intend to address in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to clarify the record on the statement by the gentleman from Washington. He may have just gotten the amendments, but the bill has been out there since last spring and amendments were delivered to the staff of the minority office last Thursday asking for comments. We are trying to do this in as bipartisan a way as we can because we have support from the other side.

So I don't want anyone watching this process going forward to think that the majority here has in any way not shared the information that it has with the minority.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time.

I want to rise in strong support of this legislation, and I want to commend the chairman of the full committee and the chairman of the subcommittee for the work that they have done in advancing this bill, which will benefit both America and Vietnam for years to come. And I want to especially pay tribute to the chairman of the Trade Subcommittee for his long service in this Congress and for the work that he has done over the years in the area of trade, which has made such advances for better relations between the United States and other countries and improved the lot of people in other countries as well as the lot of workers and citizens here at home in the United States. His service will be greatly missed in the next Congress.

Permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam is the next logical step in our partnership with that country. Back in 1995, with my support and that of many others on both sides of the

aisle, we embarked on a new path of political progress with Vietnam. We restored political relations and we restored economic relations. We recognized how important it was to integrate a former adversary into the global economy.

Then in December of 2001, we passed a bilateral trade agreement that has spurred economic growth for all parties. By the end of 2005, two-way trade between the United States and Vietnam had reached nearly \$8 billion, a huge increase from the base it started at just a few years earlier. Now, with the passage of this legislation, with the adoption of permanent normal trade relations, we will magnify those benefits and we will allow the United States and Vietnam to work as partners in the World Trade Organization.

The impact for our Nation will be especially dramatic in the services sector. The bill will provide more open access in telecommunications, financial services, and energy services. This is crucial, absolutely crucial, for jobs here at home in the United States. Eighty percent of the American workforce is in the service sector.

At the same time, this legislation is about more than just economics, and I think that those on both sides of the aisle recognize this fact. Permanent normal trade relations will promote additional domestic reforms in Vietnam. By increasing transparency in that country's trade practices, this bill will contribute to greater transparency in all areas of government.

From the first time that I visited Vietnam after my service in the conflict there, more than 15 years ago, to today we have seen enormous changes take place in the political structure of Vietnam. And as a Vietnam veteran, I find this especially heartwarming and especially important. We are working and we must continue to work on behalf of development and of good governance in Vietnam.

This legislation shows us that Vietnam's best interests can align with the interests of this country as well, and this is what free trade is all about. This is what free trade does for two countries, and this is why this bill has bipartisan support, and it is why it will pass, why it should pass, today.

I can only hope that in the next Congress my colleagues will take the same commonsense approach to other trade bills that will be considered and that they will have the courage to embrace a free trade agenda which will benefit Americans and people around the world alike.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this bill.

I am honored to follow my friends Mr. SHAW and Mr. KOLBE, who have invested in making this work, and it is an example of how trade policy can, in fact, be bipartisan. This is one of those examples.

For those of us who entered political life during the Vietnam War era, the passage of normal trade relations and the final step towards normalization of relations with Vietnam is nothing short of astonishing. I was honored to accompany President Clinton on his historic visit to Vietnam in 2000 and to watch the spontaneous outpouring of interest and it appeared even affection, for the American President and for America at that point. This agreement cements this important political relationship with a key Southeast Asia partner and demonstrates a roadmap for other former enemy countries to repair relations and proceed together along a mutually beneficial path.

It contributes to the continued process of reform in Vietnam, strengthening the rule of law, promoting transparency in government, and decreasing that government's role in the Vietnamese economy.

It is also good economic policy for both the United States and Vietnam, strengthens the international trading system in the wake of the collapse of the Doha Round. U.S. exports to Vietnam have increased over 150 percent since that historic visit with President Clinton to over \$1.2 billion last year, and Vietnam continues to be the second fastest economic growth engine in the world.

Vietnam has agreed to open their markets to U.S. manufactured goods, services, and agricultural commodities, including things we care about in Oregon like beef, apples and pears.

Imports from Vietnam are also important in supporting many jobs in the Northwest, as my friend from Puget Sound mentioned. Companies, I would say, like Nike and Intel have the same sort of interests, and it will also provide advantages for American consumers. Access to U.S. markets can also play an important role in Vietnam's fight against poverty as it seeks to emulate the progress of the other "Asian tigers," which have lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and sickness in East Asia.

However, I would offer two points of caution. I am concerned that the administration has agreed to self-initiate antidumping investigations against the Vietnamese textile industry, which employs 2 million people and is Vietnam's second largest export earner. By creating an uncertain atmosphere for U.S. business in Vietnam, I am concerned, and I hope that this concern is not proven to be founded, that the agreement between the administration and the Senators from North Carolina will deter U.S. companies from operating in Vietnam and harm companies that depend on imports from that country, limiting the benefits of this agreement both for the United States and the Vietnamese people, as well as setting, shall we say, a dubious precedent for future trade policy.

I do encourage the administration to work closely with the United States stakeholders and attempt to find a mu-

tually acceptable conclusion to this issue that is fair to the parties involved and does not set a dangerous precedent.

I would also repeat on the floor what I have said to friends and people that I have met in Vietnam, Vietnamese officials at the highest level in both countries, that the Vietnam record on religious freedom and human rights continues to be an impediment to a full flowering of the partnership with the United States. It decreases the legitimacy of the Vietnamese Government in the eyes of their people and people around the world.

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A truly close relationship can only be based on shared values and the Vietnam Government's record must improve in the area of human rights and religious freedom. And it is not just about the relationship between the United States and Vietnam and helping oppressed people in Vietnam. It is only with this freedom of the economy and religion that they are going to be able to benefit the full flowering of their economy.

Mr. Speaker, in the end, permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam is a win for both the United States and Vietnam on all fronts. And I for one enjoyed working with the junior Senator from Oregon who helped lead the passage in the Senate, demonstrating once again that trade does not have to be one of these mindless partisan issues. I strongly support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do as well.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5602. Opposing PNTR for Vietnam is in the interest of the Vietnamese and the American people. As you know, Vietnam has been subject to a trade agreement with the United States since 2001. How has it gone? If you care about Vietnam, then you should care to know that Vietnam has a lot to lose as poor as that country may be.

Vietnam had a growth rate of 9 percent between 1993 and 1997, the year the Asian financial crisis hit. In other words, under the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, economic growth was very respectable, but the global experience of developing countries with WTO roles is disappointing at best.

During the WTO decade, that is 1995 to 2005, the number and percentage of people living on less than \$2 a day has jumped in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the Caribbean. The rate of worldwide poverty reduction has slowed. Per capita income growth in poor nations decline when they sign up for the WTO.

And structural adjustment policies by the IMF and the World Bank also cause the economic situation of the people in those countries that sign up for the WTO to be impaired.

Per capita growth from 1980 to 2000 fell to half of what occurred between 1960 and 1980, 1980 prior to the imposition of the WTO-IMF package. I worry about the Vietnamese people if the PNTR should pass. If you care about Vietnam, then you should care to know that the PNTR could have the effect of causing, one, millions of peasants to be thrown off the land as agricultural supports are withdrawn; two, millions of workers to lose their jobs as state enterprises wither in the face of foreign competition or downsize and speed up operations in an effort to stay competitive.

Privatization, right on its way. At the beginning of this year, I was one of the Democratic representatives chosen by the Speaker of the House to visit Southeast Asia, and we visited Vietnam.

One of the things that struck me during the visit, particularly to the south part of Vietnam, was the ubiquitous nature of the bicycle. People use bicycles as a primary means of getting around, and it is linked to the culture. There are rules that impose high tariffs and taxes on bringing cars in to operate in Vietnam. Those rules and tariffs are just going to be wiped off the books, pushed aside.

This agreement is going to have a profound impact in creating a transition in the culture of Vietnam away from a use of an effective and efficient means of transportation, towards choking streets that are already clogged with a lot of people, with automobiles at a time that we should be thinking about the relationship between trade and global climate change.

I mean, after all, the WTO does not permit human rights, workers' rights or environmental quality principles to be put into trade agreements. So here we are celebrating the growth of free trade at the same time the worldwide economic crisis continues.

Somebody has got to make the connection between demanding that the WTO have environmental quality principles written into these agreements, and you are going to see countries like Vietnam suffer as a result of that lack. Have we not had enough of the folly of the World Trade Organization? Have we not lost enough good-paying jobs in this country? Have we not learned that the U.S. cannot for long be the world's biggest market and biggest consumer if our people are not making wealth through manufacturing? I mean, we need an American manufacturing policy where the maintenance of steel, automotive, aerospace and agriculture is seen as vital to our Nation's national security.

Mr. Speaker, if you care about jobs in the United States, then you should be concerned to learn that the U.S. balance of trade with Vietnam has gone from a surplus in 1993 to a deficit of over \$5 billion.

As Chinese manufacturers move south to Vietnam in search of even cheaper labor, more and more exports

will come from Vietnam to the United States and more and more jobs in the U.S. will disappear. Wake up, Congress. We have got close to an \$800 billion trade deficit, and this bill just keeps going in the same direction.

Goodbye, American jobs. No workers rights. No human rights. No environmental quality principles. Why are we doing this?

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Florida has the right to close?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has the right to close, that is correct.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I feel confident this measure before us will pass quite easily. I am glad that you have allowed the House to consider it today. I am sorry that Mr. RAMSTAD did not get a chance to come. We are going to miss Mr. SHAW as he leaves us. Mr. KOLBE, I am sorry he has left the floor. He was also a promoter of trade in underdeveloped countries and has been a real contributor to that effort here in the Congress.

However, this House has a little bit of work left to do in trade. And I talked to the chairman of the committee, Mr. THOMAS, before he left about whether or not we can get a bill between now and the time we get out of here. I would urge the Speaker and the chairman to act on a bill that extends the expiring trade preference programs, the Andean Trade Promotion Program and the generalized system of preferences. These are programs that have been in place for many, many years and have had a very positive effect in the underdeveloped world. And I think it is important that we not allow them to lapse in the midst of transition between party control and whatever.

There are a lot of people out there whose jobs depend on how those are implemented. And I think that the chairman understands that and has given me his assurance that he is going to talk to the Senate about whether we can get through such a piece of legislation, because it is vital to these developing countries and the workers and the American businessmen and consumers.

If you are trying to plan to source some of your material overseas and you do not know what the law is going to be applying to it, it is very hard for you to plan in advance, as the garment industry does or other industries. You need some certainty about when things are going to be available and what preferences will be in place so that the costs can be considered.

I would urge the Speaker in this thing to bring us a short-term clean extension. There are a lot of things out there that can get onto these bills that really do not add, in fact are very controversial.

But the clean extension should include the provisions for Haiti, which is

the poorest country in our hemisphere, and certainly we want to do what we can for them. Sub-Saharan Africa is also a very undeveloped area that is having enormous economic problems. And for those kinds of supports I think there ought not to be any kind of opposition to them. The problem is they always get coupled with everything else under the sun that people have always wanted to do.

I hope the chairman and the committee and the subcommittee and the Speaker will all come together and bring us a bill and we will support it as we have done this one today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that after all of these years, I finally found something that I agree with with the gentleman from Washington, and that is the statement with regard to the Andean countries, Africa, and with Haiti.

I would hope if we cannot conclude a satisfactory agreement, free trade agreement with the countries that we are working with now, most notably Peru and Colombia, that we should have some short-term extension of the Andean preference for those countries.

At this time we do not have one, an agreement with Ecuador. However, Ecuador is in a situation now of going into an election where they have one pro-American candidate, and one that is pro-Chavez. I think we should watch that very closely, and I think that we have an obligation to do everything we can for our friends and their economic growth. I will leave it right there.

But I think that we need to, and I would hope that in the next Congress, which I regret that I will not be part of, to see these things through that we should continue our work to become, and continue to be free trade.

I would like to also comment on the comments made by my friend from Ohio with regard to the low wages and low standard of living in Vietnam. I traveled there in the late 1980s with then-chairman Gibbons. It is the same CODEL that Mr. THOMAS made reference to in his opening remarks.

There we saw a very impoverished nation. We stayed at a government house in which the conditions were deplorable. In fact, one of the spouses along on the trip took all of her husband's undershirts and laid them on the bed before she would even get into the bed. We had rolling blackouts. The country was an economic disaster.

But we saw something very important. And I think this was really driven home, particularly, Jake Pickrel, whom many of us know, his wife fell and broke her hip. The doctors who was traveling with us took her down to the hospital in Vietnam, and he came back and said this is 1950s technology, the x-ray equipment there. And of course we immediately flew her out of Vietnam, where she could get and did get proper treatment.

I think we can look at Vietnam now, and I have not been back since then. But I understand the economic strides that they have made are really tremendous. And that is almost 100 percent due to their changing their economy so that it can thrive and it can grow and is not held back by the 100 percent socialistic tendencies that it seemed to have at the time.

Also I think that there is no question but that our trade will grow with Vietnam, because this is an agreement that works both ways. Their tariffs come down, our exports will increase, there is no question about that. As usual, and we find in most countries, that the tariffs of the country that we are taking down tariffs with has a higher tariff than we do.

So we should benefit, Vietnam should benefit and the economy of both countries will be better off for it. And when an economy as small as Vietnam mixes with an economy as large as the United States, it is very easy to realize that any type of stimulus that you give those economies will be a very, very big impact on their economy.

I have a letter here from the U.S.-Vietnam World Trade Coalition, and it is signed by Madeleine Albright, Jim Baker, Charlene Barshefsky, Samuel Berger, Harold Brown, Warren Christopher, William Cohen, Lawrence Eagleburger, Carla Hills, Michael Kantor, Henry Kissinger, Anthony Lake, Robert McNamara, Colin Powell, Robert Rubin, George Shultz, Robert Strauss, and Clayton Yeutter, very much in favor of this agreement.

Washington, DC, September 8, 2006.

DEAR COLLEAGUE: As the bipartisan sponsors of H.R. 5602, to provide Vietnam with Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status, we forward you the following letter signed by numerous former Cabinet Secretaries, U.S. Trade Representatives and others involved in trade and foreign policy in previous administrations.

We hope you find this letter useful as you consider your vote on this important issue.

Sincerely,

JIM RAMSTAD,
Member of Congress.
MIKE THOMPSON,
Member of Congress.

U.S. VIETNAM, WTO COALITION,
July 11, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT, *Speaker,*
House of Representatives.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader,
House of Representatives.

Hon. BILL FRIST,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Minority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

We strongly support the President's proposal to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status to Vietnam. America's long-term security and economic interests will be advanced by Vietnam's full integration into the rules-based global trading system. Vietnam can become a catalyst for growth and development in Southeast Asia, and will offer significant opportunities for U.S. companies, workers, and consumers.

In the thirty years since the end of the conflict in Southeast Asia, the United States

has worked steadfastly to normalize relations with its former adversary. This effort proceeded, step by step, as we sought the fullest possible accounting of American prisoners of war and personnel missing in action. The "Roadmap" to normalization helped to achieve significant progress in this regard. We enjoy today a multifaceted, mutually beneficial relationship with Vietnam that has enabled us to engage on a range of issues, including protection of religious freedom, labor, and human rights.

Vietnam is home to nearly eighty-five million people, more than half of whom are under the age of twenty-five. As a country facing a host of infrastructure and human development challenges, Vietnam merits not only our attention, but also our support for the promising reform process that is underway. In this vein, the 2001 U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement was an important milestone, and it has contributed to the development of a more open, market-oriented economy with important potential benefits for the Vietnamese and American peoples.

PNTR and WTO accession for Vietnam will strengthen America's linkages with the commercially and strategically important region of Southeast Asia, which, with a GDP of nearly \$3 trillion, represents our fourth largest export market. The comprehensive WTO accession agreement reached by Vietnam and U.S. negotiators will provide even broader market access across a range of U.S. goods and services. Equally important, it will enhance transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

The granting of PNTR for Vietnam represents the logical next step in the normalization of relations between our two countries, a process that has been made more effective by broad bipartisan support in Congress, and that has spanned successive presidential administrations during the past three decades. We support the granting of PNTR in advance of Vietnam hosting the Annual APEC Leaders Meeting in November, in which President Bush will participate. This will further encourage Vietnam's emergence as a responsible regional partner, as we together address a myriad of complex international economic and security issues.

We urge the Congress to approve PNTR for Vietnam at the earliest possible opportunity this summer.

Sincerely,

Madeleine K. Albright, James A. Baker III, Charlene Barshefsky, Samuel L. Berger, Harold Brown, Warren Christopher, William S. Cohen, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Carla A. Hills, Michael Kantor, Henry A. Kissinger, Anthony Lake, Robert McNamara, Colin L. Powell, Robert E. Rubin, George P. Shultz, Robert S. Strauss, Clayton K. Yeutter.

□ 1600

I think the Members on both sides of the aisle will certainly find somebody on that list that they have a great deal of respect for for their particular view with regard to matters pertaining to trade.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank Mr. RAMSTAD, who

is trying to get back here in order to take time on the floor, and really I think if he were here, and I will not hesitate because he is not, to praise him for the good work that he has done and his foresight in bringing this particular bill forward.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns about establishing Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with Vietnam without mandating essential human rights protections.

In August, the Government of Vietnam arrested and held a U.S. Citizen, Cong Thanh Do, on false charges. Only with the efforts of many U.S. officials was Mr. Do released.

The Government of Vietnam arrested and imprisoned Mr. Do, a U.S. citizen, on false charges even when it was trying to convince the U.S. Congress to grant permanent normal trade relations.

What practices will the Government of Vietnam engage in when they are not trying to convince the U.S. Congress to pass PNTR?

I believe that had the Majority allowed us ample time for consideration and debate on PNTR, we may have been able to include critical human rights protections.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill until sufficient time is granted to include necessary human rights protections.

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for the permanent normalization of trade relations (PNTR) with Vietnam. With the Doha round of global trade talks in limbo, the U.S. must continue to pursue an active bilateral trade agenda that makes real gains for America's working families.

My hometown of Laredo has been transformed by trade. Since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), I have watched as trade transformed communities in Texas from areas of marginal business activity, to some of the most rapidly developing counties in the nation. Laredo now serves as the largest inland port in North America and takes in 60 percent of all NAFTA traffic.

But our current trade agreements are simply not enough. In today's global economy, we cannot afford to stand idle but instead must push ahead with increased trade liberalization. The Vietnam agreement does just that.

Agricultural products are crucial exports for my congressional district. With Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and our new trade relations, Vietnam will reduce tariffs on most U.S. agricultural exports to 15 percent or less. Texas farmers will be able to sell in the Vietnamese market on a level playing field with competitors in other WTO member countries. Without PNTR with Vietnam, Texas's exporters will lose. I urge my colleagues to join me today in making history and supporting America's working families by granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Vietnam.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5602 legislation to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Vietnam, and to establish a procedure for imposing quotas on imports of subsidized textile and apparel products of Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak American soldiers are dying in Iraq in support of a noble effort to create a democratic government. Why

then are we about to give Permanent Normal Trading Treatment to the dictatorship in Vietnam, a cabal of gangsters and thugs that mercilessly prohibits in Vietnam and Laos any democracy, freedom of law, freedom of the press, and human and religious rights? The Vietnamese government has never come clean on the whereabouts of over 600 American soldiers who were left behind in Vietnam after the war. I'm not talking about granting us permission to dig for American remains, I'm talking about their refusal to hand over the prison documents of those men who we know were alive when we left Vietnam thirty years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the same political party that forced us to cut and run from Vietnam has stubbornly refused to acknowledge the complete lack of freedom there and in Laos. It doesn't care if we retreat from Iraq just like we did from Vietnam, before the job is done. But what truly disturbs me is how the majority can go along with this and reward the thugs in Hanoi for what they did and continue to do to their own people and to the relatives of our veterans who never returned. Have we completely lost our moral compass? Is cheap labor so much more important than democracy, freedom of religion and supporting our soldiers and their families? Do we care anymore about freedom?

Accordingly, I strongly urge my colleagues to reject this misconceived initiative that insults our troops and ignores the wishes of good people of Vietnam who want to live free from the thugs in Hanoi.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I have long been an ardent supporter of trade expansion because the bottom line is jobs. Fully 95 percent of the world's population lives outside the United States, and the global economy is projected to grow at three times the rate of the U.S. economy. We must continue to take steps to make sure American farmers, manufacturers and service providers remain leaders in the international marketplace and our products have fair access to foreign markets.

Vietnam is the fastest growing economy in Southeast Asia and continues to grow in significance as a U.S. trading partner. By our granting Vietnam PNTR status, U.S. businesses will be able to take advantage of the increased market-access opportunities the Vietnamese have offered in return. And increased market access to Vietnam will also help provide U.S. companies a competitive sourcing counterbalance to China in the region.

Without passage of this legislation, U.S. companies will not be able to take advantage of the Vietnamese concessions. And in addition, the United States will not be able to engage in dispute-settlement cases with Vietnam in the World Trade Organization.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairmen THOMAS and SHAW for their leadership on bringing forward this important legislation, and I would also like to thank Ranking Member RANGEL and Representative THOMPSON for their support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 5602.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to granting permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) to Vietnam.

Just two months ago, the Vietnamese government arrested my constituent, a U.S. cit-

izen, Cong Thanh Do. Mr. Do had posted comments on the Internet while at home in San Jose, California advocating that Vietnam undergo a peaceful transition to a multi-party democracy. For exercising his U.S. Constitutional right of free speech, the Vietnamese arrested him and held him in prison for 38 days in Vietnam without charges.

Other U.S. citizens have been imprisoned in Vietnam for what appear to be political reasons, including the sister of another one of my constituents, Thuong Nguyen "Cuc" Foshee.

Although both are free today and back in America, I am concerned about hundreds of Vietnamese nationals as well as other U.S. citizens imprisoned in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government has repeatedly violated human rights. Hundreds of Vietnamese have been imprisoned, put under house arrest, or placed under intense surveillance for simply practicing their religion or speaking out about democracy and human rights in Vietnam.

Following his return to the U.S., Mr. Do provided me a disturbing list of over 130 Vietnamese nationals and U.S. citizens he believes are currently imprisoned in Vietnam as prisoners of conscience or harassed by the government for simply speaking about democracy and human rights.

In addition, groups such as the Human Rights Watch have published reports of 355 Montagnard prisoners of conscience currently imprisoned in Vietnam.

I am not alone in my concerns about Vietnam's human rights record. The Department of State, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Amnesty International, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and various Vietnamese-American groups have documented egregious violations of religious freedom, human rights, and free speech in Vietnam.

I have been a supporter of international trade. But I also know that the Vietnamese Government would correct their behavior in order to perfect a trading relationship with the United States. Given the alarming human rights violations currently underway in Vietnam, it seems a mistake for our country to grant PNTR to Vietnam without requiring that the Vietnamese Government make significant improvements in respecting human rights, free speech, and freedom of religion.

The United States of America has a long and honorable tradition of safeguarding freedom and human rights throughout the world, especially with our trading partners. We should not make an exception for Vietnam.

At a time when we are spending 8 to 10 billion dollars a month and shedding the blood of our American servicemen and women proclaiming the cause to be democracy for Iraq, how is it that we can fail to use our mere economic leverage to try to achieve human rights in Vietnam?

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill which would grant permanent normal trade relations for the government of Vietnam.

Why are we here today ready to give Vietnam—a country with an abysmal human rights record, which continues to abuse and oppress its own people—favorable trade status?

I am strongly opposed to this action and urge defeat of this legislation.

There are people in Vietnam right now, as we debate this bill, in jail for their support of

religious freedom, democracy, and freedom of speech—universal freedoms on which our country was built. If someone says they are for you, but do not want to be identified with you, how much are they really for you? Are we for democracy and religious freedom in Vietnam or are we more interested in promoting trade?

The answer to that question may lie in the incredible news just announced today that the State Department has conveniently removed Vietnam from its list of Countries of Particular Concern—a designation stamped on countries with egregious violations of human rights and religious freedom. Vietnam had been on the list in the company of China, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

I stand with the dissidents who remain in jails across Vietnam because they spoke out against human rights abuses being committed and condoned by their own government. Mr. Speaker, I call on this House to stand with the people of Vietnam who deserve our support as they seek democracy and freedom from oppression.

Later this week the President will make a historic trip to Vietnam. I have called on him to meet with Vietnamese human rights activists here in the United States, and I have asked that he meet with dissidents in Vietnam. I have asked President Bush to stand with the dissidents in the way that the Reagan administration did with regard to the Soviet Union. It is unacceptable for the United States to encourage democracy and respect for human rights and then fail to hold Vietnam to this standard before granting them PNTR.

Earlier today there was a groundbreaking ceremony on the National Mall to launch the memorial for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I ask my colleagues to think about Dr. King's words before voting on the legislation before us: "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

If the Bush administration and this Congress want to be friends with those fighting for democracy, religious freedom and an end to human rights abuses, the silence should be broken. I call on the President and our ambassador in Vietnam to meet with dissidents and to break the silence about human rights abuses in Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, our actions today are more than how much the U.S. will trade with Vietnam. The decisions we make will reach the 83 million Vietnamese people who are struggling to live in freedom. What will our answer be for them?

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5602, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those voting have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further

proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:20 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:20 p.m.

□ 1827

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 6 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 9, 2006.
Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a facsimile copy of a letter received from Ms. Ann McGeehan, Director of Elections, State of Texas, indicating that, according to the unofficial returns of the Special Election held November 7, 2006, the Honorable Shelley Sekula Gibbs was elected Representative in Congress for the Twenty-Second Congressional District, State of Texas.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk.

THE STATE OF TEXAS,
November 9, 2006.

Ms. KAREN L. HAAS,
Office of the Clerk, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR Ms. HAAS: Our office has been requested to provide you with a letter as to the status of the special election for the unexpired term for U.S. Congressional District 22. Based on preliminary, unofficial election night returns reported to our agency from counties within U.S. Congressional District 22, the winner of the special election for this seat appears to be Shelley Sekula Gibbs. These results are not finalized and do not reflect all military and overseas votes that could still be counted, nor do they represent the official canvassed total. Also attached are the unofficial results of the other congressional special elections for full terms.

If you should have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Yours truly,
ANN MCGEEHAN,
Director of Elections.

TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE ROGER WILLIAMS RACE SUMMARY REPORT UNOFFICIAL ELECTION TABULATION 2006 SPECIAL NOVEMBER ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 7, 2006

	Early vot- ing	(Percent)	Vote Total	(Percent)
U.S. Representative District 15: Multi County Precincts Reported: 278 of 278—100.00%				
Paul B. Haring—REP*	6,638	23.93	13,920	24.18
Ruben Hinojosa—Incumbent—DEM*	16,561	59.70	35,346	61.39
Eddie Zamora—REP*	4,543	16.38	8,311	14.43
Total Votes Cast	27,742		57,577	
U.S. Representative District 21: Multi County Precincts Reported: 308 of 309—99.68%				
Tommy Calvert—IND*	2,149	2.47	5,285	2.59
John Courage—DEM*	23,463	23.71	49,909	24.45
Gene Kelly—DEM*	8,378	8.47	18,355	8.99
James Lyle Peterson—IND*	930	0.94	2,198	1.08
Mark J. Rossano—IND*	590	0.60	1,443	0.71
Lamar Smith—Incumbent—REP*	61,550	62.19	122,880	60.19
James Arthur Strohm—LIB*	1,605	1.62	4,085	2.00
Total Votes Cast	98,65		204,155	
U.S. Representative District 22—Unexpired Term: Multi County Precincts Reported: 176 of 176—100.00%				
Don Richardson—REP*	2,475	5.24	7,402	5.97
Shelley Sekula Gibbs—REP*	31,057	65.74	76,940	62.08
M. Bob Smither—LIB*	8,056	17.05	23,427	18.90
Steve Stockman—REP*	4,732	10.02	13,593	10.97
Giannibicego Hoa Tran—REP*	920	1.95	2,566	2.07
Total Votes Cast	47,240		123,928	
U.S. Representative District 23: Multi County Precincts Reported: 326 of 326—100.00%				
August G. "Augie" Beltran—DEM*	1,185	2.03	2,650	2.14
Rick Bolanos—DEM	1,028	1.76	2,563	2.07
Henry Bonilla—Incumbent—REP*	30,063	51.44	60,147	48.60
Adrian Deleon—DEM*	843	1.44	2,198	1.78
Lukin Gilliland—DEM*	6,180	10.57	13,725	11.09
Ciro D. Rodriguez—DEM*	11,752	20.11	24,593	19.87
Craig T. Stephens—IND*	1,486	2.54	3,344	2.70
Albert Uresti—DEM*	5,907	10.11	14,529	11.74
Total Votes Cast	58,444		123,749	
U.S. Representative District 25: Multi County Precincts Reported: 253 of 253—100.00%				
Barbara Cunningham—LIB*	2,386	3.53	6,933	4.24
Lloyd Doggett—Incumbent—DEM*	45,439	67.30	109,839	67.25
Brian Parrett—IND*	1,224	1.81	3,594	2.20
Grant Rostig—REP*	18,467	27.35	42,956	26.30
Total Votes Cast	67,516		163,322	
U.S. Representative District 28: Multi County Precincts Reported: 236 of 236—100.00%				
Ron Avery—CON*	3,940	11.42	9,458	12.23
Henry Cuellar—Incumbent—DEM*	23,121	67.04	52,339	67.68
Frank Enriquez—DEM*	7,427	21.54	15,531	20.08
Total Votes Cast	34,488		77,328	

* CON—Constitution DEM—Democratic IND—Independent LIB—Libertarian REP—Republican

PROVIDING FOR SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE SHELLEY SEKULA GIBBS, OF TEXAS, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. SHELLEY SEKULA GIBBS, be permitted to take the oath of office today.

Her certificate of election has not arrived, but there is no contest and no

question has been raised with regard to her election.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives: