

real problem that needs addressing. We have a real problem that needs addressing now, and a good idea to address this problem of prescription drugs is to put in the Medicare program an optional program which is affordable, with a small copay that will give senior citizens who need it an opportunity to get the prescription drugs they need to improve their lives.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 4444, legislation that will extend permanent normal trade relations status to China.

In the past few days, the Senate has held a number of votes on amendments that address issues about which I care deeply. We have debated amendments that deal with such issues as ensuring religious freedom in China; organ harvesting; Tibet; and Senator THOMPSON's amendment dealing with Chinese nuclear proliferation—an issue that needs definite action.

However, I have reluctantly voted against including these, and other amendments, to H.R. 4444. I am committed to passing PNTR, and I believe we must pass a clean bill and present it to the President for his signature as soon as possible. It is long overdue.

Fortunately, as we approach a final vote on PNTR, the Senate is poised to pass a clean bill, which, in my view, will help continue the growth of our economy, and help bring us closer to realizing many of the reforms in China that my colleagues wish to see implemented.

For the past several years, the United States has enjoyed one of its longest periods of economic expansion in our history. International trade has been a vital component of this remarkable economic boom. In fact, the growth in U.S. exports over the last ten years has been responsible for about one-third of our total economic growth. That means jobs for Americans and of particular concern to this Senator, jobs for Ohioans.

As my colleagues know, America's trade barriers are among the lowest in the world, and as a result, American workers face stiff competition from overseas. Nevertheless, it is this competition that has made American workers the best and the most productive anywhere, and the U.S. economy the strongest and most vibrant in the world.

In my state of Ohio, tearing down trade barriers has helped us become the 8th largest exporter in the United States, and part of Ohio's export-related success can be linked to passage of NAFTA.

Thanks to NAFTA, historic trade barriers that once kept American goods and services out of Canadian and

Mexican markets either have been eliminated or are being phased out. The positive economic effects have been astounding, including a growth in U.S. exports to Canada of 54 percent and a growth of U.S. exports to Mexico of 90 percent since 1993—the year before NAFTA took effect.

My State of Ohio has outperformed the nation during that time period in the growth of exports to America's two NAFTA trading partners. Ohio exports to Canada have grown 64 percent and Ohio exports to Mexico have grown 101 percent. In the last several years, Mexico has moved from our seventh largest trading partner to fourth.

Since 1994—the same year NAFTA went into effect—nearly 600,000 net new jobs were created in Ohio. Although NAFTA did not create all of these jobs, the boom in export growth triggered by NAFTA, as well as the overwhelming success of the "New Economy" have contributed significantly to this job growth.

As in many States in America, unemployment in Ohio today is at a 25 year low; and some areas of the State are even facing worker shortages—in fact, too many. The claims that "countless numbers of workers" would lose their jobs due to NAFTA and become "unemployable" have rung hollow.

According to the most recent data from the United States Department of Labor, the number of workers who have been certified by the DOL as eligible for NAFTA trade adjustment assistance benefits between January 1, 1994, and September 28, 1999, is 6,074.

However, not all workers who have been certified for NAFTA trade adjustment assistance have actually collected benefits. Additional data from the Department of Labor suggests that only 20 to 30 percent of all certified workers have collected benefits. This means that most workers have moved on to other employment. It also means that NAFTA works.

Building on the success of NAFTA, we have an opportunity to watch lightning strike twice.

In November of last year, the U.S. signed an historic bilateral trade agreement with China, a crucial first step in China's effort to gain entry into the World Trade Organization. This agreement—a product of 13 years of negotiation—contains unprecedented, unilateral trade concessions on the part of China, including significant reductions in tariffs and other barriers to trade.

In return, China would receive no increased access to U.S. markets, no cuts in U.S. tariffs and no special removal of U.S. import protections. This is because our market is already open to Chinese exports, and by signing the bilateral agreement, China has agreed to open its market unilaterally to the United States in exchange for U.S. support for Chinese membership in the World Trade Organization.

If implemented, this agreement would present unprecedented opportu-

nities for American farmers, workers and businesses. In fact, according to the Institute for International Economics, China's entry into the WTO would result in an immediate increase in U.S. exports of \$3.1 billion.

An analysis produced by Goldman Sachs, which took into account investment flows, estimates that China's entry into the WTO could translate into \$13 billion in additional U.S. exports by the year 2005.

As good as this may sound, the United States risks losing the substantial economic benefits of this agreement unless permanent normal trade relations status is extended to China. Currently, China's PNTR status is annually reviewed by the President and is conditioned on the fulfillment of specific freedom-of-emigration requirements established in 1974 by the Jackson-Vanik law.

However, WTO rules require all members to grant PNTR status to all fellow members without condition. If the U.S. fails to extend PNTR status to China, then both this trade agreement and WTO rules may not apply to our trade with China.

I understand that many Americans oppose PNTR for China because of China's record on a number of important issues, including trade fairness, human rights, labor standards, the environment, and China's emergence as a regional and global military power. I share those concerns, but I believe that rather than unilaterally locking the United States out of the Chinese market, the best way to address these issues is by opening China up.

For years, American businesses have been repeatedly frustrated in their attempts to penetrate the Chinese market and get through numerous trade barriers used by China to protect its uncompetitive state-owned enterprises. In signing the November agreement, China has agreed to remove and significantly reduce these trade barriers. This would open up one of the world's fastest growing and potentially largest markets to American goods and services in a wide range of sectors, from agriculture to automobiles and banking to telecommunications. It would eventually allow U.S. exporters to freely distribute their products to any part of China without interference from government middlemen.

This agreement also maintains and strengthens safeguards against unfair Chinese imports. It preserves a tougher standard in identifying illegal dumping. What's more, with this agreement, we will have better protections from import surges than under current U.S. law. Most importantly, this agreement sets the stage for China to join the WTO and, hence, become subject to both its trade rules and its binding punishments for breaking these rules.

The United States has worked for more than a decade to secure freer access to the Chinese market. If the U.S. does not capitalize on this agreement

by giving China PNTR status, America's competitors in Europe and Asia most certainly will.

Like most Americans, I am deeply concerned about human rights, labor and environmental conditions in China. Some opponents argue that granting PNTR status would somehow remove pressure on China to improve its poor record on these issues. I don't agree.

It is important to remember that China already has the privilege of full access to the U.S. market. Let's get that clear. They already have the privilege of full access to the U.S. market. While Congress has repeatedly criticized China's record on these issues, it has never once revoked China's trade status in an annual review.

Furthermore, granting China PNTR status would not prevent Congress or the administration from continuing to speak out on any and all issues of concern that have been raised, nor would it preclude sanctioning China in the future.

In addition, I regard the expansion of our economic relationship as a far more effective method of influencing change in Chinese behavior than the status quo. If China joins the WTO, the United States will have an unprecedented opportunity to not only export more of our goods and services to China, but also our culture and values. This increased interaction will allow the United States to expose the Chinese people to Western standards of political freedom, human rights, business practices and environmental protection.

No one can predict with any degree of certainty the path China will ultimately choose for itself. But I firmly believe that opening China economically to the rest of the world can only help efforts to open up its political system and improve the lives of its people.

Some argue that China has become a major military rival to America and that increased trade would finance China's military buildup, thereby enhancing China's threat to our national security. I think this logic as inherently wrong.

History has shown that economic integration diminishes military tension and the threat of war, even among historical enemies. The European Union, which brought together two longtime adversaries, France and Germany, is a prime example of this phenomenon.

Nations that trade together share a common interest in remaining at peace and preserving the mutual benefits of free trade. Conversely, rejecting opportunities for economic cooperation would only play into the hands of the old hard-line elements in China who are already hostile to both free trade and the United States.

As the final vote on PNTR approaches, the question that this body must consider is not whether China deserves to enjoy the benefits of WTO membership.

At this point, that is not a decision the U.S. can make wholly on our own,

because China will be able to join the WTO if it has the support of its other major trading partners. Nor does the Senate need to determine whether China needs to improve its record on human rights, labor standards and the environment. It is already clear that these issues need to be addressed.

What the Senate needs to do is to decide whether our Nation will be able to benefit from a hard-fought agreement that unilaterally opens China's markets to American products, and whether the United States should use this trade relationship to advance democratic reform, build a trusting relationship, and address grievances without hostility. In my view, granting China permanent normal trade relations status is the first step in that process.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I express my admiration for the Senator from Ohio. He effectively states his case on matters of great importance to his State and the Nation. He always does that effectively. I greatly admire his views and thought processes.

PAUL COVERDELL NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, not too long ago our former colleague, Paul Coverdell, introduced the National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act. It was a bill to further Federal support to State forensic laboratories, those places where DNA evidence is evaluated, where drug evidence is evaluated, where fingerprints, ballistics, and all the other scientific data from carpet fibers, and so forth, are evaluated, and then reported out to the prosecutors around the country so cases can be prosecuted on sound science.

Today we have a crisis in our criminal justice system. We clearly have a bottleneck, of major proportions, in the laboratory arena. There is simply an exploding amount of work. More and more tests are available. People are demanding more and more tests on each case that comes down the pike. We are way behind.

In my view, as a person who spent 15 years of my life prosecuting criminal cases, swift, fair justice is critical for any effective criminal justice system. We need not to see our cases delayed. We need to create a circumstance in which they can be tried as promptly as possible, considering all justice relevant to the cases.

I ran for attorney general of Alabama in 1994. I talked in every speech I made, virtually, on the need to improve case processing. The very idea of a robber or a rapist being arrested and released on bail and tried 2 years later is beyond the pale. It cannot be acceptable. It cannot be the rule in America.

Yet I am told by Dr. Downs of the forensic laboratory in the State of Alabama that they now have delays of as

much as 20 months on scientific evidence. We know Virginia last year, before making remarkable improvements, had almost a year—and other States. Another police officer today told us his State was at least a year in getting routine reports done. This is a kind of bottleneck, a stopgap procedure that undermines the ability of the police and prosecutors to do their jobs.

I was pleased and honored to be able to pick up the Paul Coverdell forensic bill and to reintroduce it as the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Improvement Act of 2000. We have had marvelous bipartisan support on this legislation. Senator MAX CLELAND from Georgia, Paul's colleague, was an original cosponsor of it. He was at our press conference this morning. Senator ZELL MILLER, former Governor of Georgia, who has replaced Paul in the Senate, was also at the press conference today, along with ARLEN SPECTER, a former prosecutor, PAUL WELLSTONE, DICK DURBIN, and others who participated in this announcement.

We need to move this bill. It will be one of the most important acts we can do as a Senate to improve justice in America. It is the kind of thing this Nation ought to do. It ought to be helping States, providing them the latest equipment for their laboratories, the latest techniques on how to evaluate hair fiber or carpet fiber or ballistics or DNA. It ought to be helping them do that and ought not to be taking over their law enforcement processes by taking over their police departments, telling them what kind of cases to prosecute, what kind of sentences to impose and that sort of thing.

A good Federal Government is trying to assist the local States. One of the best ways we could ever do that is to support improvements in the forensic laboratories. I believe strongly that this is a good bill in that regard.

The numbers of cases are stunning. I will share a few of the numbers and statistics that I have. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the Department of Justice, as of December of 1997—it has gotten worse since—69 percent of State crime labs reported DNA backlogs of 6,800 cases and 287,000 offender samples were pending. That is human DNA we are talking about. That is not available in every case, but that is not all they have backlogs on. Every time cocaine is seized and a prosecutor wants to try a cocaine case, the defense lawyer is not going to agree to go to trial. He will not agree to plead guilty until he has a report back from the laboratory saying the powder is, in fact, cocaine. It is almost considered malpractice by many defense lawyers to plead guilty until the chemist's report is back.

This is slowing up cases all over America. The labs have lots of problems in how they are falling behind. I think we need to look at it.

One article reports:

As Spokane, Washington authorities closed in on a suspected serial killer they were