

is what the superintendents, the legislators, the State boards of education, the school boards, the principals, and the PTA say. And that is what the Senate said, that we are moving power out of Washington and back to the classroom, back to the community, back to the State. Our next year is going to be devoted to making sure that gets done. Our committee—of which the distinguished Senator from Louisiana is a member—will be having six hearings this year with the Department of Education and with many of the people whom I just mentioned to make sure the law is being implemented in the way Congress wrote it. The House of Representatives will do the same thing. Our objectives will be the same that are in this letter—working together to ensure a timely, fair transition to the new law; coordinate with Governors, State representatives, et cetera; promote State and local decision-making—in other words, make sure that what happens is what Congress said should happen.

I thank the National Governors Association especially, which took the lead in organizing this coalition. I thank each member of the coalition for organizing this coalition. I will be visiting with the Governors in a week, and I will be suggesting to the Governors—after I thank them for their support for the bill—that every single State organize a coalition just like the coalition represented in this letter.

In Tennessee, I think it would be a good idea if the Governor and the superintendent work together with the NEA, the AFT, the legislators, the State board of education, the school boards, the principals, and the PTA to make sure that in Tennessee, the responsibility for the children, the schools, the standards, and the progress is in the hands of those in whom we decided it ought to be vested. And we, at our level in Congress, will keep the spotlight on what is happening here.

There was not a piece of legislation more important that passed in the Congress last year. We got a lot of good things done in the last year, but nothing was more important than this, nothing was more difficult than this.

I have already mentioned Senator MURRAY, the Senator from Washington State, who was superb in working with both sides of the aisle to help get a result that had evaded the Senate for 8 years. I welcome the support of this coalition for the very same work we will be doing in the Senate. I hope every State will follow the example of these national organizations.

I look forward to a period of innovation and excellence that I am sure will be the result of this new era of accountability, responsibility, and opportunity placed in the hands of those who should have the responsibility for our children and our schools.

I thank the president, and I yield the floor.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

FEBRUARY 10, 2016.

JOHN B. KING, JR.,
Acting Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

DEAR ACTING SECRETARY KING: On behalf of states, school districts, educators and parents, we write to express our strong, shared commitment to making the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) a law that puts students first. We invite you to work with us to ensure that communities determine the best methods of educating our nation's children.

Although our organizations do not always agree, we are unified in our belief that ESSA is a historic opportunity to make a world-class 21 century education system. We are dedicated to working together at the national level to facilitate partnership among our members in states and districts to guarantee the success of this new law.

ESSA replaces a top-down accountability and testing regime with an inclusive system based on collaborative state and local innovation. For this vision to become a reality, we must work together to closely honor congressional intent. ESSA is clear: Education decision making now rests with states and districts, and the federal role is to support and inform those decisions.

In the coming months, our coalition—the State and Local ESSA Implementation Network—will: Work together to ensure a timely, fair transition to ESSA; Coordinate ESSA implementation by governors, state superintendents, school boards, state legislators, local superintendents, educators and parents; Promote state, local and school decision-making during implementation; and Collaborate with a broader group of education stakeholders to provide guidance to the federal government on key implementation issues.

In ESSA, Congress recognizes states and schools as well-suited to provide a high-quality education to every child, regardless of their background. We have long prioritized lifting up those students who need help the most and our members stand ready to continue this work.

Our organizations look forward to a cooperative, collaborative and productive relationship with you and your staff throughout the implementation process.

Sincerely,

Scott D. Pattison, Executive Director/
CEO, National Governors Association;
William T. Pound, Executive Director,
National Conference of State Legislatures;
Kristen J. Amundson, Executive
Director, National Association of State
Boards of Education; Daniel A.
Domenech, Executive Director, AASA:
The School Superintendents Association;
JoAnn D. Bartoletti, Executive
Director, National Association of Secondary
School Principals; Lily
Eskelsen Garcia, President, National
Education Association; Thomas J.
Gentzel, Executive Director, National
School Boards Association; Gail
Connelly, Executive Director, National
Association of Elementary School
Principals; Randi Weingarten, President,
American Federation of Teachers;
Laura M. Bay, President, National
PTA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

COMMENDING STAFF ON TRADE POLICY LEGISLATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes to thank our staff

who did so much to address what I call the need for a fresh trade policy, for trade done right through the course of this year. Our staff and Senator HATCH's staff have put an enormous amount of sweat equity into this process. I would like to thank some of these terrific and dedicated individuals here this afternoon so that all of the Senate will get a sense of what they did.

Over the course of the last year and a half, with the support of Chairman HATCH, we were able to successfully conclude negotiations to introduce four major trade bills: the trade promotion authority legislation; the trade adjustment assistance legislation; the bill that passed overwhelmingly today, the Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act; and the trade preference program renewal and enhancement program. These staff leaders helped manage those bills in the Finance Committee, on the Senate floor, completed conference committee negotiations, and along the way, they did some awfully good work in terms of assembling a bipartisan coalition for this legislation.

In my view, the last year has arguably been the most productive in terms of trade policy in decades. In my view, these accomplishments are going to make an enormous difference for American workers, American innovators, and our country's ability to compete in these tough global markets, and the stakes are just enormous. There are going to be 1 billion middle-class people in the developing world in 2025. Frankly, they are just crazy about America's goods and services. They like so much what we make, grow, and produce—whether it is airplanes, transportation equipment or our wonderful wine and cheese, our fruit, bicycles. The list just goes on and on.

I am going to be home this weekend for townhall meetings in rural Oregon. I often say that one out of five jobs in Oregon depends on international trade. Trade jobs often pay better than do nontrade jobs. If anybody is interested in a modern economic theory, I say we ought to do more to grow things here, to make things here, to add value to them here, and then ship them somewhere. With those trade-related jobs paying better, that ought to be a strategy that would win bipartisan support.

This work doesn't happen by osmosis. It happens because we have a terrific team of people behind these efforts. I would like to recognize the members of that team who have done so much to make this year successful.

Greta Peisch is our counsel. She put together the Customs components of the trade enforcement package. Her patience and her ability to work with staff, with industry, with all kinds of organizations—leaders representing workers, consumers—Greta Peisch creatively worked to try to address all concerns as responsibly as possible and what an impressive job Ms. Peisch has done.

Elissa Alben has done an extraordinary job in influencing the shape of

the final Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. She put in an awful lot of important and valuable exercises in negotiating TPA. Of course, these are the rules under which we conduct trade policy, and in my view she did superb work with the TPA amendments in the trade enforcement package.

Andy Heiman is our resident innovation adviser. His contributions have been crucial on Internet tax policy, on the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, trade preference, creating a new program for Nepal—an area where Senator FEINSTEIN has done an awful lot of good work—or improving the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Of course, that legislation involves several of our colleagues—Senator ISAKSON, Senator COONS, and others—who did very important work on those bills.

Jayme White is with me on the floor. He is our team leader. It would be hard to overstate the excellent work Mr. White has done. Over the last 2 years, his ideas, his patience, his leadership, and his ability to get a sense of where we needed to go for the future have been very valuable. My view is we couldn't have had these exceptional accomplishments in this Congress on the trade issue without Mr. White.

Now, he is not here on the floor, but I want to say a word about Jeff Michels, our chief of staff. Jeff has been with me since I came to the Senate. I think it would be fair to say there is not a person in the Nation's Capitol who better understands the intersection, particularly on technology and innovation, between policy and politics. We would spend the entire afternoon if we were to talk about the good work Jeff Michels has done on these issues, but in particular, on the Internet tax freedom bill, Jeff Michels was there during those first days in 1998. Our former colleague from the other body, Chris Cox, was the sponsor on the Republican side of the aisle. I was the sponsor of the legislation in the Senate. I had pretty much just arrived in the Senate. We were struck by the idea that somebody might be trying to tax Internet access. If you tax Internet access, you are doing something that is extraordinarily regressive. What it means—for example, in the State of Louisiana—if somebody were to try to do this in one of our States that doesn't already have some kind of grandfathered arrangement, taxing Internet access means that you have new regressive taxes in America—taxes that are especially punitive to working families, families who are trying to use the Internet to find out about educational opportunities or employment or maybe they are using it to learn more about dealing with matters associated with raising children. We wouldn't have the Internet tax freedom legislation, in my view, without Jeff Michels.

In addition to the problem with the prospect of taxing Internet access, what we found back then is just out and out discrimination. For example,

people would buy a paper snail mail and they wouldn't face a tax. Then they would buy the online edition of the very same publication, and they would face a tax for the online edition. We said: That seems pretty odd, even by Washington, DC standards. Let's ensure that there is, in effect, technological neutrality. So what the Internet tax freedom bill is all about is ensuring that there are no regressive taxes to hit working families hard on Internet access and that we don't reward discrimination against technology and innovation. That work would not have been possible without Jeff Michels.

Importantly, Joshua Sheinkman, who is the Democratic staff director, and Mike Evans, our chief counsel, did masterful work in navigating all the pitfalls and landmines of the Finance Committee, the Senate floor, and the other body in the Congress. Their leadership and their experience has been essential to our success on trade and all other policy matters before the committee.

Before I wrap up, I want to note that none of this happens just coming from one side of the aisle. Chairman HATCH's trade team and senior staff were absolutely essential to the success of the last year and today. Specifically, I commend Everett Eissenstat, Douglas Peterson, Shane Warren, Andrew Rollow, Jay Khosla, Chris Campbell, the staff director of the Finance Committee, and Mark Prater, whom we have always been very proud of because he is an Oregonian. All of his friends still give me a hard time when we are working out in Southeast Portland at the gym. Mark Prater is a truly talented and thoughtful public servant, and we appreciate his leadership.

I would also like to thank a couple of others who have been very helpful in the leadership to work with us. Ayesha Khanna on the Democratic leader's staff and Brendan Dunn have been very helpful in terms of working closely with our team.

Finally, there are a couple of alums. These issues have gone on so long, I believe the Presiding Officer was probably practicing medicine when we started some of these battles. A number of alums have also contributed significantly to the work that was completed today.

Hun Quach and Ayesha Khanna started working on Customs legislation what seems like eons ago under Chairman Baucus, and Alan Treat helped lay the groundwork for the ENFORCE Act. The ENFORCE Act is really landmark legislation—landmark legislation that Alan Treat helped lay the groundwork for.

What we found when we set up a sting operation that demonstrated this is that trade cheats all over the world were basically laundering merchandise. They would get caught violating the trade laws in one jurisdiction, and they would just move to another, slap a label on the box, and off they would go.

Alan Treat helped lay the groundwork to get the ENFORCE Act, which I think is going to be a landmark in our ability to get tough with the trade cheats and those who rip off American jobs.

So good policy doesn't just get created out of the ether, and it doesn't get advanced unless you have dedicated staff on both sides of the aisle. It doesn't happen just because a Senator has an election certificate. So I wanted to take just a few minutes this afternoon to make sure that the Senate understood that there were very capable staff on both sides of the aisle who gave up nights and weekends, family time, and a lot of opportunities they could have had to catch a movie or a game or go for a jog. It has led us to be able to introduce four major trade bills. So I thank them. They don't get thanked enough. They probably deserve a lot more praise than I have given them this afternoon, but at least what they have heard from me today is a start.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE ENFORCEMENT BILL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I stand before the Senate to talk about legislation that was marked up today in committee that deals with the opiate addiction crisis we have in this country.

Before I do that, and while my colleague is still on the floor, let me congratulate him and Senator HATCH, who is on the floor, for the legislation that was passed today that will now go to the President with regard to trade—and two provisions in particular: one that Senator WYDEN just talked about, which has to do with ensuring that when you get an order against an unfairly traded import from a country because it is dumped or because it is subsidized, that you can't just take that product and shift it to another location to evade the Customs duties. That is called the ENFORCE Act. It is going to make a huge difference. I introduced it with him originally, and it is legislation that will help Ohio steelworkers and steel companies in particular, but it helps everybody who goes through the long process—which is a little better, now thanks to the Level the Playing Field Act—to get an order against a product that is not being sold here fairly, to ensure that some country doesn't just move it to another jurisdiction. I thank Senator WYDEN for his hard work on that issue and ensuring that we can have a more level playing field. If it is level, we can compete and win, but when it is not level, it is impossible for our workers, our farmers, our service providers to be able to get a fair shake. So I thank the Senator from Oregon for that.

The other is the BDS legislation, which didn't get as much play on the