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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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NAFTA

DOLE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT FATE OF TRADE PACT IN CONGRESS: REPUBLICAN LEADER REPORTS ON MEETING WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT

I WANT TO REPORT TO MY COLLEAGUES ABOUT A RECENT MEETING IN MEXICO CITY WITH PRESIDENT SALINAS AND MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET. OUR REPUBLICAN DELEGATION, CONSISTING OF MYSELF, SENATORS GRAMM, HATCH, MCCAIN AND GREGG, AND REPRESENTATIVE BONILLA, WENT TO MEXICO CITY TO DISCUSS THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT. WE WANTED TO TELL PRESIDENT SALINAS THAT THE DEBATE OVER NAFTA THIS FALL WILL BE CONTENTIOUS, BUT THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO FIGHT FOR IT.

PRESIDENT SALINAS IS A VERY POSITIVE PERSON, BUT HE IS ALSO REALISTIC. HE TOLD US HE FULLY RECOGNIZES THE DIFFICULTIES FACING THIS AGREEMENT IN CONGRESS. HE SAID THAT HE WANTS TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. HE ALSO SAID WHAT WE ALL KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT NAFTA: THAT IT WILL CREATE JOBS, OPPORTUNITY AND GROWTH ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. THAT'S WHAT NAFTA IS ALL ABOUT, AND THAT IS WHY I SUPPORT NAFTA AND INTEND TO HELP PRESIDENT CLINTON EVERY STEP OF THE WAY TO RESPOND TO NAFTA'S CRITICS, BUILD SUPPORT FOR THIS AGREEMENT, AND PASS IT IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

CONCERN ABOUT FATE IN CONGRESS

BUT, I AM BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF THIS TRADE AGREEMENT IN CONGRESS. WE SEEM TO BE LOSING GROUND EVERY DAY, WHEREAS WE SHOULD BE GAINING GROUND. SUPPORT FOR NAFTA MAY BE ERODING IN CONGRESS BECAUSE WE DO NOT HEAR THE ADMINISTRATION SPEAKING OUT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS AGREEMENT. I MUST NOTE THAT AMBASSADOR MICKEY KANTOR HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB AS AN ADVOCATE FOR NAFTA, BUT HE HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY A LONE VOICE UP TO THIS POINT. PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS MADE A FEW SUPPORTIVE REMARKS, BUT OTHER ISSUES SEEM TO BE CROWDING OUT THE MESSAGE. I HAVE BEEN DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR NAFTA. NEVERTHELESS, NO ONE BUT THE PRESIDENT CAN DEMONSTRATE THE ADMINISTRATION'S UNWAVERING COMMITMENT. NO ONE BUT THE PRESIDENT CAN WORK WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE, IN BOTH PARTIES, TO SHOW THEM WHY NAFTA IS SO IMPORTANT AND MUST PASS THE CONGRESS. IF WE DO NOT SEE ACTION SOON, I FEAR THAT THE LOUD AND PERSISTENT CRITICS OF NAFTA WILL PREVAIL BEFORE WE EVEN GOT STARTED.

NAFTA GOOD FOR AMERICA

NAFTA IS GOOD FOR AMERICA. WHILE NAFTA IS PRIMARILY A TRADE AGREEMENT, THE CONSEQUENCES OF NAFTA ARE FAR-REACHING. CREATION OF JOBS AND A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE U.S AND MEXICO WILL HELP TO RESOLVE A HOST OF COLLATERAL PROBLEMS. PRESIDENT SALINAS KNOWS THAT JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY AT HOME HELP REMOVE THE INCENTIVE TO SEEK THEM ELSEWHERE. AMBITIOUS, RISK-TAKING MEXICANS FROM SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL MEXICO WILL BE LESS INCLINED TO FIND A BRIGHTER FUTURE TO THE NORTH WHEN THAT FUTURE IS AVAILABLE TO THEM IN THEIR OWN CITIES AND TOWNS. FURTHERMORE, POOR COUNTRIES ARE POOR DEFENDERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. A WEALTHIER, INCREASINGLY PROSPEROUS MEXICO WILL HAVE GREATER RESOURCES TO DEVOTE TO COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, AND TO ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP AND IMPROVEMENT.

WE DISCUSSED ALL OF THESE ISSUES WITH PRESIDENT SALINAS, AND OUR REPUBLICAN DELEGATION WAS VERY ENCOURAGED BY OUR VISIT. WE INVITED HIM TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES THIS FALL TO HELP US AND PRESIDENT CLINTON EDUCATE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ON THE TRUTH ABOUT NAFTA. I HOPE HE IS ABLE TO DO THIS.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST NAFTA

EDUCATING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT NAFTA IS CRUCIAL BECAUSE SO MUCH MISINFORMATION IS CURRENTLY IN CIRCULATION. THE EFFORT TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT NAFTA HAS BEEN NEARLY DORMANT, WHILE THE HYSTERICAL AND PARANOID CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE AGREEMENT IS IN HIGH GEAR.

TO LISTEN TO NAFTA'S CRITICS, YOU WOULD THINK THIS TRADE AGREEMENT WAS NEGOTIATED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, IN THE MIDDLE OF A DESERT BY DOUBLE AGENTS SEEKING THIS COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC RUIN.

(more)

NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. NAFTA'S CRITICS PROBABLY WOULD SAY THAT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS RECEIVED INSUFFICIENT PUBLIC SCRUTINY BEFORE THEY WERE ADOPTED. THE TRUTH IS THAT NO TRADE AGREEMENT IN HISTORY HAS EVER BEEN THE SUBJECT OF AS MANY LEGISLATIVE AND PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATIONS AS NAFTA. DURING NEGOTIATIONS, THE ADMINISTRATION HELD ALMOST 1,000 CONSULTATIONS OR BRIEFINGS WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THIS INCLUDED PUBLIC HEARINGS AT WHICH HUNDREDS OF INDIVIDUALS TESTIFIED, 350 MEETINGS WITH OFFICIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES, AND BRIEFINGS OF HOUSE AND SENATE STAFF ON AVERAGE MORE THAN 3 TIMES PER DAY, EVERY WORKING DAY.

NO SUPERLATIVE HAS GONE UNUTTERED IN ATTACKING THIS TRADE AGREEMENT. PRACTICALLY NO IMAGE HAS BEEN TOO PREPOSTEROUS, NO HYPERBOLE TOO OUTRAGEOUS FOR THESE FEAR-MONGERING PROTECTIONISTS TRYING TO DEPICT NAFTA AS A SELL-OUT.

THE TRUTH ABOUT NAFTA

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT NAFTA? THE TRUTH IS THAT TRADE WITH MEXICO TODAY SUPPORTS 700,000 JOBS IN THE UNITED STATES. UNDER NAFTA, THAT FIGURE WILL GROW TO NEARLY 1 MILLION JOBS. THE U.S. HAS A \$5.4 BILLION TRADE SURPLUS WITH MEXICO, AS U.S. EXPORTS TO MEXICO MORE THAN TRIPLED SINCE 1986. MEXICANS CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF U.S.-MADE PRODUCTS: OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR MEXICANS SPEND ON IMPORTS, 70 CENTS GOES FOR PRODUCTS IMPORTED INTO MEXICO FROM THE U.S. MEXICO IS OUR THIRD-LARGEST TRADING PARTNER, AFTER CANADA AND JAPAN. BARRIERS TO TRADE WITH MEXICO EXIST TODAY. THESE BARRIERS MAKE IT HARDER TO DO BUSINESS WITH MEXICO, AND YET OUR TRADE WITH THAT COUNTRY HAS EXPLODED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE REASON IS THAT MEXICO ITSELF HAS LIBERALIZED ITS OWN ECONOMY, EXTENSIVELY, AND THAT LIBERALIZATION HAS BROUGHT A NEW ERA OF INCREASING PROSPERITY, RISING WAGES AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR MEXICO. IT HAS ALSO BROUGHT NEW BUSINESS FOR U.S. EXPORTERS, AND 426,000 NEW JOBS FOR AMERICANS WHO PRODUCE THOSE EXPORTS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FREE TRADE

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. OTHER COUNTRIES ARE LINING UP, SEEKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER THIS EXCITING NEW MARKET-OPENING ENTERPRISE. THIS ENTERPRISE IS NOT A ZERO-SUM GAME, AS THE CRITICS CONTEND. OUR GAIN IS NOT SOME OTHER COUNTRY'S LOSS. IT IS A WIN-WIN SITUATION, AND NOTHING SHOWS THAT MORE CLEARLY THAN OUR IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE WITH MEXICO AFTER PRESIDENT SALINAS TOOK BOLD AND COURAGEOUS STEPS TO OPEN UP HIS COUNTRY'S ECONOMY TO THE WORLD, AND LET HIS PEOPLE BEGIN TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF TRADE.

TO PROSPER WE MUST TRADE. IT'S THAT SIMPLE. I WILL BE WORKING TO HELP PRESIDENT CLINTON PASS THIS AGREEMENT BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO. WE PROMISED PRESIDENT SALINAS THAT WE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE NAFTA A REALITY, AND THAT IS WHAT WE WILL BE DOING OVER THE WEEKS AND MONTHS AHEAD.

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Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 5:20 PM.