Our chief competitors are the Europeans. They are spending $50 billion a year supporting their farmers—$50 billion, 10 times as much as what we are spending. We spend $5 billion a year. As I have said to my colleagues many times, the Europeans have a plan, and they have a strategy. Their plan and their strategy is to dominate world agricultural markets. Why? Because the Europeans have been hungry twice, and they never intend to be hungry again. They understand full well the importance of agricultural dominance, and they are ready to do what it takes. They are doing it the old-fashioned way: They are buying the markets.

We are sending our farmers out saying, ''You go compete against the French farmer and the German farmer.'' Fair enough. We are ready to compete against any farmer anywhere, anytime. But in addition, we are saying to our farmers, ''While you are at it, you go compete against the French Government and the German Government and good luck,'' because those countries have decided they are going to stand with their producers, and they are going to fight, and they are going to win. If you look at what is happening in world agriculture, you can see that strategy and that plan is working, because the Europeans are on the ascent while the United States is descending. They are going in the right direction; we are going in the wrong direction, and we wonder why.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator yield? I don't want to lose my time. We were allocated a few minutes before we vote on cloture. The Senator is into, I think, my segment of the 9:15-to-9:30 time. I don't want to disturb the distinguished Senator, but I don't want to lose my time. Is that the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The regular order was for the Democratic leader to control half of the 1-hour time; that is 30 minutes. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, did the Democratic leader distinguish how that time would be divided?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, he did not.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would be glad to enter an agreement right here with my colleague so that the Senator from South Carolina would have time before the cloture vote and so my colleague from New Jersey would have time. I would be happy to wrap up very quickly so they can have sufficient time before the cloture vote.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Sufficient time is 15 minutes. I am almost down to 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 15 minutes prior to the cloture vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is objection.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Well——

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me reclaim my time, and let me just end so the Senator from South Carolina has as much time as he can remaining. My understanding was that I had 15 minutes this morning.

But I would be glad to wrap up and simply say that what I have described this morning is an ongoing crisis in my State. And I am going to be asking my colleagues to respond, as they so graciously responded last year. Let me say, it is just not my State, because what is happening in my State is an early warning signal to others as to what can happen. We are headed for a calamity in my State. Others will experience the same thing unless we find a way to fix it.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor so that my colleagues can have the remaining time.

Mr. TORRICELLI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. TORRICELLI. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 13 minutes 11 seconds remaining.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Thirteen minutes. I offer to the Senator from South Carolina to divide the time. I don't see any other choice. I would be glad at this point to divide the time with the Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I appreciate the distinguished Senator from New Jersey permitting me that opportunity.

What really happened is I was told from 9:15 to 9:30. And I will try to wrap it up as quickly as I possibly can.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

PRODUCT LIABILITY REFORM ACT

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, what really occurs is we are back now—the leadership says after 10 years—really after 20 years. And much has occurred during that 20-year period. Practically all of the States have faced up—the State of Oklahoma, the State of South Carolina have all enacted product liability reform. It is not a particular problem. The small businesses, for example, are enjoying the best of investment, the best of new initiatives in small business.

The small business folks, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, are really quoted as saying here that—and I quote an economist for the NFIB—''Far from worrying that the expansion has just about played itself out, more and more small-business owners feel that the best is yet to come.'' So the small businesses really are not having any problem.

The idea of the litigation explosion has been answered, that you could not get insurance to get insurance. Foreign competition—the foreign companies are flowing into America without any problem of product liability. So now they try to say it is the small business thing. And, of course, the small businesses say the best is yet to come and they are having one of the finest clips that they have ever had. So they are not having problems.

We searched Lexis-Nexis to find where these egregious verdicts are that this particular measure would take care of. They are nonexistent. So we looked at the bill itself. And you find out really what is a politically rigged instrument to take care of the political needs, not the business needs, of America, whereby you take a poll and kill all the lawyers. And we have been into that.

The lawyers have become unpopular until everybody needs one. And the best of the best lawyers, who have been bringing these cases and succeeding and everything else, are to be sidelined in this drive by big business, all under the cover of small business.

The bill itself, Mr. President, is an atrocity. I say that because now the plea, in the preamble of the Rockefeller-Gorton measure, is uniformity. And they start off immediately saying, with punitive damages, those States who regulate the punitive damages or control them are not applied to by this particular measure; but those States that have it, this bill would apply. So there is no uniformity on the very face or attempt to get uniformity itself. It is not just for small businesses. That is for all businesses, large and small, relative to the matter of uniformity and relative, of course, to the matter of small businesses itself.

But we come, Mr. President, with the phone ringing all during the weekend and last night with respect to the sellers being exempted under this bill. They know what they are doing. There are dozens and dozens of cases up in New York to the effect that the sellers—only one—the hospital, where they have incurred AIDS, hemophiliacs have incurred AIDS, through tainted blood transfusions or otherwise. And obviously they cannot find out the individual, but you know it is applied by the hospital. You want to get the safety practice by the hospital or the seller. Now, this vitiates dozens and dozens of cases over the country, and particularly in the New York area.

Again, with respect to asbestos cases, they know exactly what they are writing. They are saying, with respect to toxic materials, that, of course, this does not apply to toxic materials, that the asbestos is exempted from the 18-year statute imposed because the reference is to the exclusion of toxic harm. But, of course, asbestos is not toxic in the eyes of the Owens Corning counsel. He announced asbestos is not toxic, so they get rid of that group of cases.

Otherwise, they really come with the statute of repose, which is the most egregious thing I have ever seen. Here we are trying, in product liability, to protect consumers and individuals, and they say now that they would exempt an injured person from a defective product; but the purchaser or owner of

that particular product for whom the injured person is working, he or she or it can sue that manufacturer. So the rights of businesses are protected to the detriment of injured consumers in America. The unmitigated gall of including that particular provision in this bill, talking about product liability is just unheard of.

But in any event, the lower-income worker, the matter of the punitive damages of $250,000 or less—you can well see that lower-income worker from McDonald's who is making $15,000 or $17,000 a year—double the economic injury; namely, double that salary loss of $34,000 for a Dalkon Shield user, that we have the Dow Chemical implant on the front page, the settlement, this morning, $3.2 billion. But under the Dalkon Shield here, that particular individual——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HOLLINGS. We still have until half past the hour, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HOLLINGS. What time has expired? I got 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. There was agreement to divide the time equally that was remaining. That was 13 minutes. Your time has expired.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I would question the ruling of the Chair. I was told I would have the 15 minutes. I don't know how the Chair can change that ruling. That was the understanding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was objection to your unanimous consent request. That was not the case.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I am sorry I could not sneak in the majority leader's handwritten amendment. He can amend but we can't.

Mr. TORRICELLI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. TORRICELLI. The Senate will soon be considering the product liability legislation. If enacted, the Senate would be continuing an unfortunate practice in this country where manufacturers of firearms have some special protection outside of consumer products.

Mr. President, as indicated by this chart, for many years this country has regulated the manufacture and the sale of consumer products, items as seemingly as innocent as teddy bears, for recall, safety standards. And yet firearms were outside the design requirements, the safety requirements, and the recall requirements.

This issue comes before the Senate again under product liability, because it is my intention, with the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to offer an amendment to exempt gun manufacturers from the $250,000 punitive damages protection.

Through all these years, the Congress has failed—by design requirements for safety, for distribution requirements—to ensure that firearms get to legitimate owners, to provide the American people with real protection. What the Congress has failed to do, the courts have begun to recognize. Suits are being filed across America by parents when they lose their children to weapons that get in illegitimate hands, by neighborhoods, by police officers, by cities, seeking damages caused by weapons that could have been designed more safely, with child restraint provisions. If, indeed, this product liability legislation is enacted without our amendment, those suits will not proceed.

Yesterday at a press conference in the Senate, we heard from a Steven Young, a father of a murdered teenage boy in the streets of Chicago. He has joined with three families to sue gun manufacturers because, in his judgment, they knowingly allow these weapons to be sold to criminals. The families of the young people killed in Jonesboro, AR, in a school shooting are planning to file suit because those weapons had no safety mechanisms on them. Mayor Rendell of Philadelphia and Mayor Daley of Chicago are both preparing suits on behalf of the citizens of their cities to recover the costs from gun violence because manufacturers have not been responsible in design and manufacture. If this Senate does not enact this amendment and, indeed, tries to prohibit it by voting cloture shortly, the suits may never happen.

Families and cities, the people of our country, are in a similar position with gun manufacturers to where we were 40 years ago with the tobacco companies. Congress has not acted, so people pursue the law in the courts. Indeed, it took 40 years and hundreds of cases before tobacco companies began to understand they needed to act responsibly. If these cases can proceed against gun manufacturers, there will be discovery, documents will be produced. As liability mounts, gun manufacturers will be careful who sells these weapons, who is able to buy these weapons, that the law is complied with, and that there is every possible safety feature built into these weapons. The liability of the gun manufacturers can work to protect our families. Thirty-six thousand people died from gun violence last year. This is the leading cause of death among young people in our cities. We ask the Congress to do nothing but to allow the courts to proceed in offering people protection.

The shield that would be offered to gun manufacturers involves many of the weapons sold in this country. Twenty-three percent of all 38-caliber pistols, 2 of the 10 guns most often found at crime scenes, are made by small manufacturers who would be protected under product liability. One company alone, Davis Industries, produces 50,000 Saturday-night specials a year. In all, 20 percent of the weapons produced in America will be shielded from any liability above the $250,000 in punitive damages if we enact this product liability reform without our amendment.

It has often been said by the National Rifle Association that it is their responsibility to protect gun owners. If the National Rifle Association opposes this measure, they will be taking a clear stand against gun owners. It is gun owners who will have the right to go to court if a product is improperly sold, improperly manufactured. The only people who will be jeopardized are people who are either victims of these guns or own these guns. This is a chance for the gun lobby to do something responsible. They claim they want to be on the side of the gun owner and law enforcement and innocent victims—take a stand.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the cloture motion, allow us to proceed on the amendment, and offer this protection to the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes of my leader time in addition to the 8 minutes that Senator HOLLINGS has in the remaining part of our morning business time to Senator HOLLINGS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

Mr. DASCHLE. As I understood it, Senator HOLLINGS had 8 minutes remaining. If he does not, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from South Carolina from my leader time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I thank the distinguished leader.

Mr. President, what I was trying to emphasize was the particular so-called compromise. I know the plea is, wait a minute here, we have been trying and trying and trying and trying, and of course as long as Victor Schwartz and that crowd is paid, they will continue to try.

But the fact of the matter is, there is no need. The States object to this particular mode. The Republican contract objects to this particular thing. They are trying to put and retain things back at the States when it comes to crime. They want the particular States to take care of it. When it comes to education, they want to do away with the Department, let the States handle it. They want to do everything else, except when you get with all the lawyers and, namely, the injured parties in America, which are bringing this magnificent safety record.

So what happens is that without any demand from the States, but, rather, the opposition of the States—I ask unanimous consent that a letter from the National Conference of State Legislatures dated last year, October 27, 1997, be printed in the RECORD with the updated letter from the National Conference of State Legislatures, June 18, 1998.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES,
Washington, DC, October 27, 1997.

Hon. ERNEST F. HOLLINGS,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HOLLINGS: As you know, product liability legislation, in some form, may come to the Senate floor before Congress adjourns in November. I urge you, on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures, to vote against any such bill, for the simple reason that this is an issue best resolved by state legislatures.

A good deal of lip service is given today to the advantages of our constitutional system of federalism and to the advantages of devolving authority to the states, But, from the point of view of state legislators, this rhetoric belies the reality of an accelerating trend toward concentration of power in Washington. Every year, Congress passes more laws and federal agencies adopt more rules that preempt state authority. Little consideration is given to the cumulative effect of preemption piled upon preemption. Little thought is given to the shrinking policy jurisdiction of state legislatures.

Moreover, little consideration is given to whether state legislatures are responsibly exercising their authority. The threat to preempt state product liability law, for example, comes at a time when state legislatures have been particularly active in passing reform bills. As the attached article from the June issue of The States' Advocate shows, over the past ten years, thirty-three product liability reform bills have been enacted in the states. In addition, states have been reforming their tort law generally. As of December 1996, 34 states had revised their rules of joint and several liability and 31 had acted to curb punitive damages.

Just as the preemption contemplated by a national products law is unprecedented, so the intrusion on the operation of state courts is both unprecedented and disturbing. National products standards would be grafted onto state law. In a sense, Congress would act as a state legislature to amend selected elements of state law, thus blurring the lines of political accountability in ways that raise several Tenth Amendment issues. Given the Supreme Court's recent interpretation of the Tenth Amendment in *Printz* v. *United States*, the legislation might even be unconstitutional.

Our constitutional tradition of federalism deserves more than lip service. It's time to vote ''no'' on product liability and similar proposals to unjustifiably preempt state law.

Sincerely,

RICHARD FINAN,
President, Ohio Senate, President, NCSL.

DAN BLUE,
North Carolina House of Representatives, President-elect, NCSL.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES,
Washington, DC, June 18, 1998.

Hon. ERNEST F. HOLLINGS,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HOLLINGS: I write on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in opposition to S. 2236, a bill that would supplant state product liability laws with federal standards.

For NCSL, this is a simple matter of federalism and states' rights. Tort reform is an issue for state legislatures, not Congress. There is no precedent for such a federal intrusion into such an important area of civil law. Moreover, we regard it as highly inappropriate and perhaps unconstitutional for the state courts to be commandeered as instruments of federal policy in the fashion contemplated by S. 2236.

The states have made considerable progress in reforming their tort law, including product liability law, over the past decade. State legislatures are in a good position to balance the needs of the business community and those of consumers, not just in the abstract but in a way that reflects local values and local economic conditions. This is as the Founders intended it when they established a federal republic rather than a unitary state.

The issue then is not finding the right compromise between consumer and business interests in crafting the language of S. 2236. The issue is whether we will take a giant step toward nationalizing the civil law, to the detriment of our constitutional system of federalism. Again, please oppose S. 2236.

Sincerely,

DONNA SYTEK,
Speaker, New Hampshire House of Representatives, Chair, NCSL Assembly on Federal Issues.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, again, it is not a national problem, as I have emphasized.

From July 1, 1998, I ask unanimous consent that the American Bar Association letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION,
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 1, 1998.

DEAR SENATOR: We understand that on July 7, broad federal product liability legislation will be the subject of a cloture vote on the Senate floor. I am writing to you to express the American Bar Association's opposition to S. 648, the bill reported by the Commerce Committee, and S. 2236, the compromise proposal introduced by Senators Gorton and Rockefeller. The ABA believes that improvements in the tort liability system should continue to be implemented at the state level and not be preempted by broad federal law.

S. 648 and S. 2236, which would federalize portions of tort law, would deprive consumers in the United States of the guidance of the well-developed product liability laws of their individual states. This legislation would also deprive the states of their traditional flexibility to refine carefully the product liability laws through their state courts and state legislatures.

The ABA has worked extensively to improve our civil justice system, including developing extensive recommendations on punitive damages, and on other aspects of the tort liability system, for consideration at the state level. Broad federal product liability legislation, however, would constitute an unwise and unnecessary intrusion of major proportion on the long-standing authority of the states to promulgate tort law. Such preemption would cause the whole body of state tort law to become unsettled and create new complexities for the federal system. Unequal results would occur when product liability litigation is combined with other types of law that have differing rules of law. An example of this would be a situation where a product liability claim is joined with a medical malpractice claim. If state tort laws differ from the federal law in areas such as caps on punitive damages, conflicts and uncertainty would likely result; one defendant in an action could well be treated entirely differently than another. Having one set of rules to try product liability cases and another set of rules to try other tort cases is not consistent with the sound and equitable administration of justice.

The ABA opposes the product seller provisions of Section 103 of S. 648 and S. 2236 because those provisions remove the motivation of the only party with direct contact with the consumer, the seller, to ensure that the shelves in American businesses are stocked only with safe products. Seller liability is an effective way of maintaining and improving product safety. Manufacturers traditionally rely on sellers to market their products. Through their purchasing and marketing power, sellers have influenced manufacturers to design and produce safer consumer goods.

Ambiguity in the language of S. 648 and S. 2236 may result in unintentionally eliminating grounds for liability which promote safety. For example, the two bills expressly eliminate a product seller's liability for breach of warranty except for breach of express warranties. The Uniform Commercial Code, long regarded as a reasonable, balanced law, holds sellers responsible for breach of implied warranties as well. By their vague and ambiguous language, S. 648 and S. 2236 may result in preempting these long established grounds of liability.

We urge you to vote no on broad federal product liability legislation as it is an unwise and unnecessary intrusion on the long-standing authority of the states to promulgate tort law.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. EVANS,
Director.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Reading one line:

The ABA believes that improvements in the tort liability system should continue to be implemented at the state level and not be preempted by broad federal law.

So, they are talking about the compromise, and after all this give and take, and it is not quite an orderly bill, but those things that occur in time are compromises—not to mitigate against uniformity in the name of uniformity where they apply punitive damages to one group of States and not to the other group of States, not in the name of small business when they apply to big business where they were sneaked in—oh, no, we will have cloture; you can't offer any amendments. We are steamrolling this thing. Here we go. We are going to have a little handwritten amendment, by the majority leader, sneaked in at the last minute.

We saw this occur with the tobacco bill where they sneaked in an amendment that had been before the Agriculture Committee, the Lugar bill, that never was reported out of the Agriculture Committee, but they sneaked that in. Now they want to sneak in an amendment not just to take care of small business but large business. I refer to this morning's headline of the New York Times: ''Don't Amend This Bill, Lott Says,'' and then proceeds to weigh in.

So you have a little handwritten amendment here that the majority leader sneaked in—he can really take and amend his own bill, but this is a compromise worked out with the White House. This is a conspiracy in the U.S. Senate. I am not part of that conspiracy. I am for the consumers. I am for

safety in America. I can tell you here and now, this is the most egregious conduct I have ever seen.

Finally, with respect to the poor stay-at-home moms, because I see my distinguished colleague from Texas, who has got everyone sitting around the kitchen table time and, again, and stay-at-home moms. So the stay-at-home mom can get at the most, $250,000 or double, or less than that, whatever is less. I don't know what she gets when she stays at home and doesn't have any economic damage.

Or take the employee at McDonald's, a young woman who gets $15,000 or $17,000 a year working away, just married, taking the Dalkon Shield, totally injured, can't reproduce, her life is ruined. Oh, we are going to be liberal here. We will protect the small business and not the injured party and go right to the heart of the matter and give her twice her economic damage, twice $17,000, or $34,000, and the companies will write that off in a flash. We know it. You know it and I know it. It will just be a cost of doing business. And safety in America is really downgraded.

We have the most interesting safe operating businesses in the country as a result of this product liability.

There is not an explosion, Mr. President. All the reports before the committee say, wait a minute, there has been an explosion in business suing business—Pennzoil suing Texaco in Texas for a verdict of $12 billion. But, no, that is the consummate verdicts of all the product liability cases put together. There are businesses suing businesses all over. That is fine business. But when the poor injured party comes, and on a contingent basis finds a lawyer willing to take her case, do the investigating, do the trial, appeal work, and win a percentage if successful, oh, that is terrible for the economy in America; it is terrible for international competition.

Mr. President, in this global economy American firms contend at home and abroad against competitive foreign firms which operate in America. We have over 100 German plants, and over 50 Japanese plants. We have the BMWs, the Fuji Films, the Hoffman-Laroches—all these industries are coming to South Carolina, and not one is saying anything about product liability. They like what the States are doing, but we find a political problem because we have a representative downtown who is retained to get to the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, the conference board, and now the National Federation of Independent Business, saying this is just a small business. Oh, boy, it is not for large injury, I can tell you that. It is not for large injury. It is not for the consumer, Mr. President. The whole setup here is ramroded through. I can personally, just in my handwriting, sneak a little amendment on at the desk, but the rest of us can't because we have cloture.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 27 minutes under the control of the majority leader.

Mr. LUGAR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

THE AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the African Growth and Opportunity Act which has passed the House in March and is now before the Finance Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. I am the principal Senate sponsor of the bill which I introduced some fourteen months ago. There are ten co-sponsors.

I introduced the Africa bill because I believe that our policy towards sub-Saharan Africa should be revised to reflect changing global and regional realities. For too long, our policy has been based on country-by-country aid relationships and devoid of any comprehensive strategy towards the continent. As important as our child survival, health, agriculture, educational and humanitarian programs have been, they have not promoted much economic development, political stability or self-reliance. Nor have they benefitted the American economy. For that reason, it is time to re-evaluate our policy. That is the purpose of the African bill.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act is the first serious attempt to formulate a new American strategy towards Africa. It provides a general road map for expanding economic engagement and involvement in Africa through enhanced trade and investment. It seeks to establish the foundation for a more mature partnership with those countries in Africa undertaking serious economic and political reforms.

I'm pleased to note that virtually all African Ambassadors have endorsed this bill. It has wide support in the American business community, nongovernmental organizations, the African-American community, and the Administration. Indeed, President Clinton mentioned the bill in his State of the Union address in January and Secretary of State Albright included it in her list of the top four leadership challenges for 1998.

Let me summarize the bill.

First, it urges the President to negotiate free trade agreements with African countries with the ultimate goal of a U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Free Trade Area. The President will need Fast Track authority to negotiate this and other free trade measures and I strongly support that effort as well.

The bill establishes a US-Africa Economic Cooperation Forum to facilitate senior level discussions on trade and investment. No such dialogue now exists and there exists no long term agenda involving the private sectors here and in Africa. Doing business in Africa will require high-level dialogue and this Forum will signal to the investment and trading communities that we take Africa seriously.

Africa lacks the infrastructure needed to promote and sustain economic growth and development. The bill establishes two privately-managed funds to leverage private financing for small and medium sized companies. The two funds would operate under OPIC guidelines and require no official USG appropriations. One is a $150 million equity fund, the other a $500 million infrastructure fund. Given the enormity of the needs, these are modest sized funds.

Each of these initiatives will take time to mature. They have worked in other parts of the world.

The initiatives in the bill that would bring more immediate economic benefits to Africa and the United States would provide greater access to our markets for African exports. The bill authorizes the President to grant duty-free treatment for products now excluded from the GSP program—subject to a sensitivity analysis by the International Trade Commission. It extends the GSP program to Africa for 10 years, which is important for business planning and predictability.

The bill also eliminates quotas on textiles and apparel from Kenya and Mauritius, the two countries in sub-Saharan Africa which do not have quota-free access to the United States. They would receive this status only after adopting a visa system to guard against illegal transhipment of goods. Since global textile quotas are scheduled to disappear in the year 2005 under terms of the GATT, our bill merely gives Africa a small head start in a more competitive textile market of the future.

Some have argued that granting quota-free and duty-free access to American markets will weaken our domestic textile industries. If that were true, I would not be advocating this provision. African imports of textiles and apparel now account for less than one percent of our total textile imports. The International Trade Commission looked at this issue and concluded that enactment of our bill would increase U.S. imports of textiles and apparel from Africa to between one and two percent of our total textile and apparel imports, a negligible impact.

While this amount is small in terms of our overall textile and apparel imports, it can have sizable benefits for Africa. The lower costs of African textiles will also benefit American retailers and American consumers.

Warnings about the illegal transhipment of Asian-origin garments through Africa, under liberalized arrangements, are false alarms. The House strengthened these safeguards substantially during its consideration of the bill.

Mr. President, let me conclude by saying that we have an historic opportunity to help integrate African countries into the world economy and to