



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Opening Statement of Sen. Chuck Grassley
Hearing on the Implementation of the U.S.-Singapore and U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreements
June 17, 2003

Good morning. Today we will hear testimony on implementation of the U.S.- Singapore and U.S.- Chile Free Trade Agreements. The two agreements we are discussing today are the first to be considered under the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) procedures that Congress implemented last year with the passage of the Trade Act of 2002. The fact that the Senate will be considering these agreements this summer is a testament to the power of TPA. Because of TPA, the United States is truly back in the game. We wouldn't be here today without the leadership provided by Ranking Member Baucus last year. Working together, we forged a strong bipartisan consensus in the Senate in support of TPA. I hope this bipartisan consensus will carry through while we consider these two agreements.

The procedures we put in place under TPA require that the Administration consult closely with Congress throughout the negotiating process. Careful adherence to the principles articulated in the Act are key to achieving strong support for these agreements in Congress. I'm pleased to note that, in my view, the Administration for both of these agreements met that test. Both the Chile and Singapore FTAs are state-of-the-art agreements that provide real economic and strategic benefits to the United States and to my home state of Iowa. Today we have with us Norm Sorensen, representing Principal Financial Group from Des Moines, who will discuss how his company will benefit from the strong services provisions in the U.S.-Singapore FTA. I think some of the insurance provisions of the agreement are particularly good, and hope they will serve as a model for future FTAs. Jon Caspers, a pork producer from Swaledale, Iowa, will discuss how the market access provisions of the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement will affect him and his business.

I want to note how pleased I am about the strong agriculture market access provisions found in the Chile FTA. These provisions are complemented by the removal of unnecessary sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to U.S. agricultural exports. Although not part of the agreement, removal of these barriers allows U.S. agricultural exporters to reap the full benefits of our hard-earned market access negotiations. I think resolution of unwarranted SPS barriers in tandem with our bilateral and plurilateral trade negotiations is a good model which should be followed as we pursue additional free trade negotiations.

I'm confident that today's testimony will show that both the Singapore and Chilean FTAs are solid agreements which deserve the broad support of the Congress. I look forward to working with the Administration and Ranking Member Baucus to get these agreements implemented before the August recess, and to continue our bipartisan efforts to open foreign markets for U.S. goods and services.

I'm disappointed that I will be unable to participate in the remainder of this hearing, but today I am managing the bill on Medicare reform on the Senate floor. However, we need to get this process of implementing these agreements under way, so I appreciate the willingness of International Trade Subcommittee Chair Craig Thomas to chair the remainder of today's hearing.