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**Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)  
Highlighting the Need to Renew Trade Adjustment Assistance**  
*As prepared for delivery*

In 1934, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "No country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources. Demoralization caused by vast unemployment is our greatest extravagance."

President Roosevelt said these words in a fireside chat nearly 80 years ago. Our economy was slowly on the path to recovery after suffering the worst financial crash in American history.

Roosevelt had turned his focus to helping the "permanent army of unemployed" Americans. His resulting investment in America's human resources put millions to work.

Today, we face a similar situation. After a significant financial crisis, our economic recovery is fragile, but improving. Housing foreclosures have slowed. Investors are looking for new opportunities.

But 14 million Americans are still looking for work. Like President Roosevelt, we must bolster our investment in America's human resources because, as in 1934, America's strength is in its people.

When people are denied the opportunity to work, they are denied the dignity that comes with that work. Trade Adjustment Assistance, or TAA, is the right investment in America's workers.

TAA provides training and income support to thousands of Americans so they can get a good-paying job right here at home. TAA helps them earn the dignity that comes from putting in a good day of work.

I worked with my friend, Ways & Means Chairman Dave Camp, on a TAA agreement that improves the efficiency, accessibility, and effectiveness of the program. We worked to scale back the cost of the program while maintaining the important support and training that helps workers secure good-paying jobs here at home.

The amendment we are offering today is the agreement I made with Chairman Camp on TAA. It extends coverage to workers in the services sector, which makes up 80 percent of our economy. Extending this coverage means manufacturing workers, as well as computer programmers and airline maintenance technicians, will have equal access to the TAA program.

The amendment also extends TAA to all workers. Current law does not cover eight of our top ten trade partners, including China, Japan and Korea. Our amendment removes this geographic limitation and expands TAA's benefits to cover trade with all countries.

Job retraining is the heart of TAA. This training has a proven track record of providing workers the skills they need to secure their next job.

We know it works – and works well – in my home state of Montana and across the country. Al Drebes worked at the Plum Creek Lumber mill in Pablo, Montana. In January 2009, Al was laid off. With a young family, he needed to quickly find a new job. But after he spent months sending his resume around, he realized that he needed to update his skills.

Al signed up for TAA and began training in Recreation Power Equipment Repair. Following his classroom training, TAA partnered him with a local employer, S&S Sports, which specializes in all-terrain motor vehicles, boats and jet skis. Al began on-the-job training with S&S and did such a great job that the company hired him full-time. Because of TAA job training, Al now has the security and the dignity that comes with a full day's work and can continue supporting his family.

In addition to providing essential job training, my TAA amendment also helps American workers maintain health insurance for themselves and their families. TAA-eligible workers have access to the health coverage tax credit, also known as HCTC, which provides a 72.5 percent tax credit subsidy to make health care more affordable. With nearly 50 million uninsured Americans, this benefit is more important than ever.

Finally, the TAA agreement strengthens programs that help American small businesses and small farmers. These programs – TAA for Firms and TAA for Farmers – provide targeted, intensive technical assistance to help small businesses and farmers improve their business plans. And they provide seed money to implement those plans.

This amendment also provides duty-free access to the U.S. market for imported products from certain developing countries. The Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP, lowers the costs on inputs for employers across the United States. American manufacturers use GSP imports to build cars, produce steel, and manufacture hydropower turbines.

Since GSP expired last year, American companies have paid nearly \$400 million in tariffs on these imports. By reauthorizing and extending GSP, we ensure that these workers, and workers in 129 countries around the world, have the opportunity to earn the dignity of work.

This amendment, in short, helps save and create American jobs. It helps Americans keep their jobs by providing the low-cost inputs that U.S. manufacturers need. It helps Americans who lose their jobs get the skills they need to secure a new job and earn the dignity that a solid day of work provides. And the amendment is fully offset and doesn't add a dime to our deficit.

This amendment invests in America's human resources, just as President Roosevelt envisioned. This program ensures that our workers are not demoralized by unemployment, but that they are energized by the hope of again standing on their own two feet.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

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