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Remarks of Senator Chuck Grassley  
Former Senior Trade Negotiators News Conference  
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Today, Congressman John Tanner, a Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, and I join many of this nation's most distinguished former trade negotiators to call on Congress to pass legislation renewing the President's trade promotion authority this year. Joining Congressman Tanner and I today are:

Ambassador and former USTR Bill Brock; Ambassador and former USTR Clayton Yeutter; Ambassador and former USTR Carla Hills; Ambassador and former Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Eizenstat; Ambassador and former Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade David Aaron; Ambassador and former Deputy USTR Robert Hormats; Ambassador and former USTR Jeff Lang; Ambassador and former USTR Michael Smith; Former Assistant USTR Bob Cassidy; Former Special Assistant to the Agriculture Secretary for International Trade Paul Drazek; Former USTR Chief Agricultural Trade Negotiator Greg Frazier; Former USTR General Counsel Professor John Jackson; Former USTR Chief Agricultural Trade Negotiator Don Nelson; and Former Senior Agricultural Trade Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture Isi Siddiqui.

I want to point out that the letter to Congress we are releasing today is also signed by four distinguished former trade negotiators who could not be with us this afternoon, Ambassador Robert Strauss, Ambassador Richard Fisher, Ambassador Rufus Yerxa, and Ambassador Alan Holmer. All of these distinguished American negotiators and diplomats have served Republican and Democrat Presidents alike over the last three decades. They have helped create modern United States trade policy. They served on the front lines. They know what it takes to get the job done. They may disagree with me on a trade issue or two. But they all agree on one central point: They believe it is vital to America's future, and America's interests, that Congress give the President the authority he needs to successfully negotiate trade deals. To open new markets. To lower tariffs that discriminate against American workers, farmers and ranchers.

To negotiate the ground rules that ensure fair treatment in foreign markets for the goods, services, and agricultural products of the United States, and of all countries. To eliminate expensive environmentally damaging export subsidies. And to continue America's historic 50-year leadership in international trade. Most importantly, they believe the President should get trade promotion authority this year. There are some who say we can wait. But we ask: wait for what? America's farmers, ranchers, and workers who depend on trade can't afford to wait to get back into the game. We can't afford to wait while a new round of global trade talks takes shape while our negotiators lack the credibility and authority they need to lead this process.

In fact, I can't think of one trade negotiation during the last 50 years that turned out better for America because we weren't fully engaged, and leading the way. That's why this bipartisan group of distinguished Americans are all with us today. To say it's time for America to once again lead the way on trade. And to make sure we do it this year. I want to work with all Senate Republicans and Democrats, and especially my friend and colleague Senator Max Baucus, to get this done.