

02/09/2003 Entry: "Sen. Sam Brownback reply: when KCA asked for support for the Byrd Amendment"

Thank you for contacting me regarding open trade and the United States. I appreciate your taking the time to contact me on such an important issue. There is no better guide to making tough decisions than hearing from the people whom I serve.

As the world becomes more connected, it becomes increasingly more important that the U.S. foster international relationships. By promoting fair and free trade, the U.S. economy will face the future from a position of strength. Opening worldwide markets supports the economy through creating jobs, increasing income, and lowering poverty. Since 1992, open markets have created more than 20 million new jobs. One out of every 14 workers in the U.S. business sector is supported by U.S. involvement in foreign markets. Additionally, U.S. producers are becoming more competitive as consumers have more choices in their purchasing decisions.

U.S. tariffs are already among the world's lowest, averaging less than three percent. For a state like Kansas having open markets is vital for the exportation of agriculture commodities, so additional liberalization should benefit our producers. About 25 percent of gross farm income comes from exports and Kansas ranks sixth in the nation for states with the greatest shares in agriculture exports. I have worked to reduce trade barriers and encourage food sales abroad.

The House approved the Trade Promotion Authority bill, H.R. 3005 on December 6, 2001. This bill sets forth the general trade negotiating objectives for the United States, including objectives dealing with labor and the environment. H.R. 3005 was then presented in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Finance. The Finance Committee passed H.R. 3005 with amendments on December 18, 2001. Senate Majority Leader Daschle has scheduled H.R. 3005 for Senate action in April.

Having open markets worldwide allows the U.S. to prosper beyond our borders. Additionally, we benefit from the imports that are brought into the nation every year. Without free and open trade, the U.S. economy would suffer and American jobs could be endangered. I will continue to pursue legislation that promotes our national interest, and I look forward to Senate consideration of H.R. 3005 next month.

On an additional note, in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, and the ongoing threats, such as anthrax, I especially want to thank you for your patience when making inquiries to my office. I apologize for any delay in responding to you. As you might know, the Hart

Office Building, where both of Kansas' U.S. Senate offices are located, was closed last October as a result of the largest biological attack in our nation's history. In addition to forcing us to work out of temporary quarters, all postal mail deliveries were suspended pending irradiation measures. We are all working diligently to ensure that all Kansans' inquiries, concerns, and suggestions are answered in the most expeditious manner possible.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. As America prosecutes this war on terrorism, I ask for your prayers for our troops fighting this war, for all the victims of the September 11th attacks and their families, and for all of our sons and daughters at home and abroad who are placing themselves in harms way in order that freedom and justice will prevail for all. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,

Sam Brownback
United States Senator
SB:jtb