

Thank you, Chairman Grassley, for the opportunity to share my ideas on free trade with members of your Committee.

I am humbled that you think I can help you set the agenda.

Free trade helps Minnesota—Minnesota's farmers, Minnesota's entrepreneurs, Minnesota's manufacturers and Minnesota's workers.

There are great benefits to them all when they compete in a global economy.

The Congress deserves congratulations on a job well done. Passing permanent normal trade relations with China was a true watershed event for free trade in our history.

PNTR will redefine our country's relationship with the biggest population in the world, and it will boost the flow of democratic ideals and fair business practices in China.

You did the right thing.

But now is not the time to rest on our laurels.

To keep this momentum on healthy trade, my message to you today is fourfold and simple:

- Put politics aside,
- Correct past mistakes,
- Embrace emerging markets, and
- Compete with confidence.

First, now is the time put politics aside, honor and enforce past agreements and to make this new agreement work.

Now is the time to build a tripartisan consensus on trade policy.

For example:

Next year, you will consider a bilateral and commercial trade agreement between the United States and Vietnam.

I believe that open trade can bring positive energy and democratic values to a relationship between two countries that has poisoned so many.

Ask Senator John McCain or Senator Bob Kerrey about the need to embrace such an agreement. Do not let their efforts in Southeast Asia--or the efforts of an entire generation – go by the wayside.

Through trade, help our nations heal the past.

Trade may even help bring peace to the Middle East, a peace that is badly needed today.

A Senate endorsement of the U.S.–Jordan free trade agreement will be a step in the right direction.

Another positive step would be to grant the President Fast Track Trade Negotiating Authority.

“Fast Track Authority” should be called “Common Sense Negotiating”. A new name might give it the P.R. help it needs.

“Fast Track” is not about fly-by-night decisions made by the President in a vacuum; it is about the ability to make time sensitive decisions that will help America compete in this fast-paced new economy.

It’s about recognizing that we can’t let gamesmanship hold us back in the new economy.

It’s about common sense.

Every President has had this negotiating power, and it makes sense that we show the world that in the year 2000, we’re truly ready to compete in the worldwide ring.

The need for Common Sense Negotiating Authority is not about politics or power. President Bush will need it as much as President Gore, President Nader, President Hagelin....well, I think you get the picture.

My second message to you today is: Correct Past Mistakes.

We already know that closed doors don’t work. We’ve tried that. For 45 years we’ve had an embargo to prove that we don’t like how Cuba rules.

Well the joke's on us. Castro has outlasted nine going on 10 presidents.

Communism remains.

Markets are shut to our agriculture products, and we haven't impacted improvements in human rights.

Opening the Cuba market won't be a huge money-maker. I understand that it's a small market compared to China.

But opening Cuba would demonstrate to regular people at home, and our trading partners around the world, that common sense can prevail.

An open Cuba makes perfect sense to small businesses like Nuaire, a small Minnesota company that manufactures, among other things, biological safety cabinets and incubators.

Nuaire wants to see Cuba sanctions lifted because they have lost years of business to Swedish and German competitors as a result of the embargo.

And—while they have been trying to deal with the current approval and licensing requirements at the Department of Treasury that would let them sell in Cuba, they are running into a severe case of RED TAPE.

Small companies like Nuaire are the backbone of our economy—and making them suffer because of a stubborn, pigheaded and outdated chip on our shoulder is just plain stupid.

I think you get my point.

THIRD, EMBRACE EMERGING MARKETS.

I strongly believe that Minnesota's potential in the world marketplace is proportional to the success we have in helping our minority communities thrive at home.

We need to change the mindset about the potential of minority-owned businesses and embrace new communities who are adding more and more value to our economy every day.

As Governor, I am serious about helping to change this mindset in Minnesota.

We must learn how to tap into the new immigrant energy that has taken ahold of our state.

It's an exciting challenge.

There is a declaration being circulated in Minnesota called the "Emerging Market Alliance Declaration." Minority entrepreneurs who want to raise awareness about their potential in Minnesota drafted this declaration.

You have it in front of you today.

I have signed this declaration, and I encourage you to do the same, pass it on to your colleagues and take it back to your states.

It's a move toward a new mindset.

Take a lesson from Minnesota. Embrace emerging markets inside and outside our borders.

Speaking of emerging markets, currently, we have a great success story of a country once considered an emerging market.

Mexico, I am please to say, has arrived.

Our southern neighbor is now 13th in the world in GDP, and represents a market of opportunity for Minnesota products and services.

I will be traveling to Mexico at the end of this month to seek those expanding opportunities.

What an exciting time of change and energy in Mexico. President-elect Visahntae (Vicente) Fox has – like I said on election night in Minnesota –shocked the world.

And thanks to President Zedillo's statesmanship, a smooth and democratic transition will help breed success.

As U.S. neighbors, we must recognize this historic transition, congratulate President Zedillo, and Embrace President-elect Fox!

He represents new ideas, change and energy. We must do what we can to help him and Mexico succeed.

Finally, one last message: Compete with confidence!
U. S. workers are the best!

As Governor of Minnesota, I support free trade because, simply, it improves the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

When you adjourn and go home to your states, spend some time talking to small businesses, farmers and young people who have new opportunities in front of them today because of free trade.

Talk to your Governor. I can tell you, it's a great time to be Governor. We are able to advocate for our states around the globe while riding a huge economic wave.

Governor Vilsak of Iowa has been to Taiwan, Japan and China, Governor Shaffer of North Dakota was just in China, Governor Whitman of New Jersey has been to Japan and Tawain, and Governor Lock of Washington has been around the globe. Use these great ambassadors and support them in their quests for trading opportunities for your constituents.

I, for one, am going to continue to boost Minnesota's opportunities on the world stage. I have done it in Japan, in Canada, and I will do it in Mexico, China and Europe during my tenure as Governor.

I'll put Minnesota workers, Minnesota farmers and Minnesota manufacturers up against anyone in the world.

Have the confidence to do the same for your constituents.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to address you.