

me because he's on a trade mission to Mexico City, "However, I want you to know that I fully support your efforts to pass legislation giving your administration fast-track authority to negotiate trade agreements."

This isn't a Republican issue; this isn't a Democrat issue. Trade is a jobs issue. And the United States Senate needs to hear the voices of the working people and get me a bill I can sign.

And you know what else the United States Senate needs to do? They need to pass an energy bill. One of the great things about our agriculture sector is, we grow enough food to feed America. And therefore, we're secure when it comes to food. Gosh, I would hate to be the President of a country that has to import a lot of food. It would mean you're beholden to somebody else's farmers to feed your people.

We grow a lot of food. We can feed our people. We grow enough that we can put it on the ships here and send it around the world, and we ought to be feeding the world, as well. But that's not the case for energy. We receive a lot of our energy, over 50 percent of it, from other parts of the world. Sometimes they like us; sometimes they don't. [Laughter] And it's those times when they don't like us that makes me nervous as the President of the country. [Laughter] It's in our national interest to have a national energy plan. It's in Louisiana's interest to have a national energy plan. It's in America's interest to have a national energy plan.

A national energy plan will help us conserve more and produce more. It will make us less reliant upon foreign sources of energy, and it will help us create more jobs. The people of Louisiana understand that energy equals jobs. So do a lot of other people in America. This bill is bottled up in the United States Senate. It's about time they focused on creating jobs in America and get me a trade bill and an energy bill for the good of the American people.

The good news is, I think we got a United States Senator—I know we've got one from Louisiana who understands that; John Breaux understands. He understands jobs, and I appreciated him supporting me on the tax cut.

And that's another good piece of legislation that passed out of Washington, and it came just at the right time—just at the right time. You see, our economy started slowing down significantly in March of 2001. And when the economy begins to slow down, one of the best remedies is to let people keep more of their own money, is to take less of the money from the working people.

When a longshoreman is able to keep more of his own money, his family has more money to spend. And as they spend that money, somebody, obviously, has to produce the product for them to buy. And as they produce the product, it creates jobs. And in order to stimulate the economy, one of the good ways to do so is to have tax relief. We passed meaningful, real tax relief that says, finally, our Government trusts people with more of their own money so that people can make the right decisions for their families.

You know, there are some in Washington, however, who seem to be indicating that in order to come out of a recession, you should raise taxes.

*Audience members.* No-o-o!

*The President.* I don't know what economic textbook they've been reading—[laughter]—but it's not the one that most Americans have read. They understand tax relief is the best way to encourage an economic recovery in America.

Now, we can help and should help those workers who lost their jobs as a result of the September the 11th attacks. We should work together to extend unemployment—insurance employment benefits. We ought to help pay for health care for workers that have been laid off; that's something we ought to do. But most Americans don't want an unemployment check. They want