



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley on the Prospects for the Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act

This important piece of legislation has been stalled for much too long. I am worried that if we do not see appointment of Senate conferees soon, our opportunity to see passage of the bill this year will be lost.

The Senate historically passes a miscellaneous tariff bill at the end of every Congress. In fact, the bill that remains stalled today was supposed to have been passed at the end of the 107th Congress. However, a mark-up scheduled for September 26, 2002, was cancelled, leaving the bill as unfinished business for the current Congress. Upon resuming the chairmanship of the Finance Committee, my intention was to complete unfinished business from the 107th Congress as quickly as possible. To that end we passed the bill out of the Senate Finance Committee by voice vote on February 27, 2003. Unfortunately, continued efforts to load the bill down with costly and controversial items delayed floor consideration of the bill for over a year – it was not until March 4, 2004, that we were able to pass the bill by unanimous consent. The House appointed conferees on May 20, 2004. However, to date, Democratic leadership has prevented the Senate from appointing conferees. So, with just a few legislative days left, the bill remains stalled. I fear it may never reach the President's desk.

This is a shame. This bill contains many trade provisions, primarily duty suspensions, reductions and extensions, for products that are not produced domestically. This bill supports American factories and workers by allowing manufacturers to save money when they import these products. We should be doing all we can to help American manufacturing compete. And that is what this bill does. I hope we will see progress in appointing conferees soon.