Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support H.R. 434, the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This measure is long overdue, and will help strengthen the economies of the world's poorest continent. This bill presents very little threat to American industries in the short run, and holds a huge upside potential for American jobs and profits to increase in the long run.

The most important part of this bill is that it will make a huge difference for the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa by giving them tariff reductions under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), as long as they are cooperating with international labor and transshipment standards.

At a time when military action is something to be avoided and there are real questions about what economic assistance we should provide around the world, this bill allows us to directly participate with and help strengthen other countries through global trade. I believe it will ultimately be the best long-term investment for the American taxpayer.