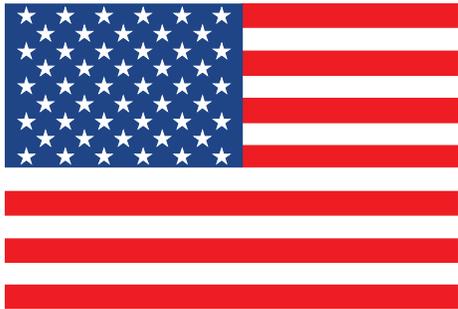




Colombia FTA Briefing Materials



www.tradeagreements.gov

2008

**Office of the United States Trade Representative
Executive Office of the President**



**United States – Colombia Free Trade Agreement
Briefing Materials
2008**

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Dates You Need To Know



November 18, 2003

The Bush Administration formally notifies Congress of its intent to enter into FTA negotiations with Colombia. USTR begins consultations with congressional committees, including the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees regarding a potential FTA with Colombia.

May 18, 2004

Upon completion of the 90-day congressional consultation period required under Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), negotiations with Colombia begin.

February 27, 2006

United States and Colombia finalize the FTA.

August 24, 2006

The Bush Administration sends Congress a letter notifying its intent to sign the U.S.-Colombia FTA.

November 22, 2006

USTR and Colombian Trade Minister sign the U.S.-Colombia FTA.

May 10, 2007

The Bush Administration and Democratic leaders reach a bipartisan deal to clear a path to congressional approval of the Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea FTAs by adding enhanced labor and environmental provisions.

June 14, 2007

Colombian legislature approves U.S.-Colombia FTA as originally drafted.

June 27-28, 2007

Congress extends (365 to 59 in the House and by Unanimous Consent in the Senate) one way, duty-free treatment to more than 90 percent of Colombian goods entering the U.S. market – leaving U.S. companies disadvantaged.

June 28, 2007

Colombian government signs Protocol of Amendments incorporating enhanced labor and environmental provisions agreed to as part of the May 10 compromise.

July 2, 2007

House leaders issue statement indicating they would be willing to consider the Colombia FTA once “concrete evidence of sustained results” in reducing violence and impunity in Colombia are shown.

- In 2007, President Uribe added more than 2,000 Colombians to its Ministry of Interior and Justice’s protection program. Today, more than 9,400 individuals – approximately one-fifth of whom are trade unionists – are receiving protection.
- In 2007, Colombia extradited 200 criminals to the United States. Since President Uribe took office in 2002, Colombia has extradited 720 criminals – mostly for drug trafficking – to the United States.

September 2007

Administration invites more than 400 members to join Cabinet-led trips to Colombia to see first-hand the progress made on labor and environmental fronts. Since then, 58 members – representing both parties – have participated.

October 3, 2007

General Barry McCaffrey (Ret.) releases report on the progress Colombia has made establishing the rule of law, eliminating drug production, reducing violence, and improving the safety and economic well-being of the Colombian people.

October 30, 2007

Colombian legislature approves FTA amendments to reflect the May 10 bipartisan agreement.

November 27, 2007

Center for Strategic and International Studies releases a report on Colombia's progress since 1999 in the areas of security, governance, peace process, human rights, narcotics, social issues, and economic issues.

January 18, 2008

President Uribe issues a special decree allocating \$50 million to the Prosecutor General's office to support 2,165 new positions to further strengthen its ongoing campaign against labor violence and impunity.

February 27-28, 2008

Congress again extends (by voice vote in House and by unanimous consent in Senate) one way, duty-free treatment to more than 90 percent of Colombian goods entering the U.S. market – leaving U.S. companies disadvantaged.

April 8, 2008

President Bush transmits FTA-implementing legislation to Congress.

April 10, 2008

House of Representatives votes to change the agreed-upon rules for consideration of the U.S.-Colombia FTA.

- 42 newspaper editorial boards around the country condemn the unprecedented action.

July 2, 2008

Colombia's military rescues 15 hostages, including three U.S. citizens who had been held hostage for years by the FARC.

August 2007 – September 2008

Bush Administration completes more than 500 contacts with members of Congress on the Colombia FTA.

October 2008

Congress again extends various trade preferential programs, which give duty-free treatment to more than 90 percent of Colombian goods entering the U.S. market – leaving U.S. companies disadvantaged.

692 (As of Monday, October 13, 2008)

Days since Colombia FTA signed, with no action taken by Congress

0

Hearings Congress has held on the Colombia FTA

\$1,256,000,000

Estimated tariffs imposed on U.S. exporters to Colombia since the FTA was signed. The FTA would eliminate tariffs.

Numbers You Need to Know



0

The vast majority of Colombian products pay no tariffs to enter U.S. markets.

1

Colombia is our largest export market for U.S. agriculture products in South America.

4

Even with U.S. companies paying high tariffs to enter the Colombian market, Colombia is our fourth largest trading partner in Latin America.

18

America's two-way trade with Colombia reached \$18 billion in 2007.

35

U.S. industrial and consumer goods exported to Colombia face tariffs of up to 35 percent, with much higher tariffs on many agricultural products.

80

Upon entry into force of the U.S. - Colombia FTA, over 80 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial goods to Colombia will enter duty-free immediately.

365

Since 1991, Congress has voted to give Colombia and other Andean countries one way duty-free access to the U.S. market. In June 2007, 365 members of the House of Representatives voted to continue this program.

9,000

More than 9,000 U.S. companies export to Colombia, of which 8,000 are small and medium-sized firms.

200,000

Each large off-highway truck made in the United States pays over \$200,000 in taxes/tariffs to enter the Colombian market.

8,600,000,000

In 2007, total U.S. goods exports to Colombia reached \$8.6 billion.

It is time to level the playing field and end one-way trade with Colombia.

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October 2008



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative

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October 2008

The Case for the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement

“This agreement has strategic implications. It is very important for [the United States] to stand with democracies that protect human rights and human dignity; democracies based upon the rule of law.”

- President George Bush, May 2, 2007

More than 10,000 U.S. companies export to Colombia, of which approximately 8,500 are small and medium-sized firms. Source: Department of Commerce

1. Open a significant new export market. America’s two-way trade with Colombia reached \$18 billion in 2007, making Colombia our fourth largest trading partner in Latin America and our largest export market for U.S. agriculture products in South America. In 2007, total U.S. goods exports to Colombia reached \$8.6 billion. The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will further open this dynamic and growing economy to American goods and services. It will provide particular benefits to U.S. farmers and ranchers by immediately eliminating Colombia’s duties on high quality beef, cotton, wheat, soybeans, key fruits vegetables and many processed foods upon entry into force of the agreement.

2. Level the playing field for American business, farmers, ranchers and workers. America’s market is already open to imports from Colombia. In 2007, for example, over 90 percent of U.S. imports from Colombia entered the United States duty-free under our most-favored nation tariff rates and various preference programs, such as the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) and the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement will give American businesses, farmers, ranchers and workers similar access to this important market. Upon entry into force of the agreement, over 80 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial goods to Colombia will enter duty-free immediately. The agreement also will provide substantial new opportunities for U.S. farmers’ and ranchers’ agricultural exports, and resolve sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural trade with Colombia. In addition, the agreement will remove barriers to U.S. services, provide a secure and predictable legal framework for investors, and strengthen protection for intellectual property, workers and the environment.

3. Strengthen peace, democracy, freedom and reform. In 2000, much of Colombia was controlled by three terrorist groups and ruthless narcotics trafficking cartels. With U.S. assistance and trade preferences under ATPA, the Colombian people are transforming their nation. They have achieved solid progress in promoting economic growth and social development and in reducing violence, impunity and illegal activities. The progress Colombia has made is real but critical challenges remain. The terrorist and paramilitary groups are weakened but not defeated. Violence continues to threaten all sectors of Colombian society as well as cause displacement and economic hardship. The people of Colombia are addressing these problems aggressively and decisively, but need the continued help of the United States. The U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement is a critical tool to provide licit jobs and economic alternatives to violence. Colombia is a vibrant democracy, with a history of free elections, a free press, and solid opposition political parties. Since President Uribe took office in 2002, Colombia has increased

the size of its security forces and re-established a state presence in every municipality in the country. Uribe's strong approval ratings -- over 80 percent in recent polls -- shows that this sustained commitment to improving Colombia's record in human rights and workers' rights is broadly shared in Colombia.

4. *Promote economic growth and poverty reduction.* An increasingly open market has given Colombia the tools to fight corruption and increase transparency and the rule of law. Through continued U.S. assistance and approval of the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement, Colombia can become a self-sufficient partner in the region. As such, Colombia will derive the full benefits of the global economy, and can join the growing partnership of countries along the Pacific coast of the Americas to solidify open markets and strengthen democracy in the region. The resulting increased economic activity will create additional jobs and opportunities in the formal sector and will positively influence Colombia's efforts to reduce poverty. Growth has averaged 5.3 percent since 2002 (6.6 percent in 2007); unemployment has fallen from 16 percent in 2002 to 9.9 percent in 2007; and approximately ten million Colombians have risen out of poverty in the last five years.

5. *Anchor longstanding ties with a vital regional ally.* Colombia has been a steadfast partner in combating narcotics trafficking and countering regional terror groups. The Colombian people support the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement in large numbers. A Gallup Poll conducted on September 2, found Uribe's approval rating reached over 80 percent. The Colombian Congress strongly favors the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement -- the Senate voted 55-3 and House 85-10 to approve the agreement -- showing that the Colombian people are confident that stronger ties to the U.S. will make them more secure, stable and prosperous. Approval and implementation of the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement will be a critical signal of America's support for the Colombian people, who have chosen to strengthen ties with the United States in the belief that reciprocal market access will contribute to the overall growth and development of their nation.

For more information see: www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Section_Index.html



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

www.ustr.gov

Free Trade with Colombia

Brief Summary of the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

- **Market Access for U.S. Consumer and Industrial Products:** Over eighty percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to Colombia will become duty-free immediately, with remaining tariffs phased out over 10 years. Key U.S. exports will gain immediate duty-free access to Colombia. Colombia agreed to allow trade in remanufactured goods, and will join the WTO Information Technology Agreement.
- **New Opportunities for U.S. Farmers and Ranchers:** U.S. farm exports to Colombia that will receive immediate duty-free treatment include high quality beef, cotton, wheat, soybeans, soybean meal; key fruits and vegetables including apples, pears, peaches, and cherries; and many processed food products including frozen french fries and cookies. U.S. farm products that will benefit from improved market access include pork, beef, corn, poultry, rice, fruits and vegetables, processed products, and dairy products. The United States and Colombia have worked to resolve sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural trade, including on food safety inspection procedures for beef, pork, and poultry.
- **Textiles and Apparel – Promoting Cooperation and Benefits:** Textiles and apparel will be duty-free and quota-free immediately if the products meet the agreement's rule of origin, promoting new opportunities for U.S. and Colombian fiber, yarn, fabric and apparel manufacturing.
- **Strong Protections for U.S. Investors:** The Agreement establishes a stable legal framework for U.S. investors operating in Colombia. All forms of investment are protected under the Agreement. U.S. investors will enjoy in almost all circumstances the right to establish, acquire, and operate investments in Colombia in an equal footing with local investors. Investor protections will be backed by a transparent, binding international arbitration mechanism.
- **Expanded Access to Services Markets:** Colombia will accord substantial market access across their entire services regime, including financial services. Colombia agreed to eliminate measures that require U.S. firms to hire national rather than U.S. professionals and phase-out market restrictions in cable television. Colombia also agreed that both mutual funds and pension funds in its territory will be allowed to use portfolio managers in the U.S.
- **Greater Protection for Intellectual Property Rights:** The Agreement provides for improved standards for the protection and enforcement of a broad range of intellectual property rights, which are consistent with both U.S. standards of protection and enforcement, and with emerging international

standards. Such improvements include state-of-the-art protections for digital products such as U.S. software, music, text, and videos; stronger protection for U.S. patents, trademarks and test data, including an electronic system for the registration and maintenance of trademarks; and further deterrence of piracy and counterfeiting by criminalizing end-use piracy.

- ***The Digital Age:*** The United States and Colombia agreed to provisions on e-commerce that commits all parties to non-discriminatory treatment of digital products. The parties agreed not to impose customs duties on digital products transmitted electronically. Additionally, the agreement requires procedures for resolving disputes about trademarks used in Internet domain names.

- ***Internationally-recognized Labor Rights:*** The Agreement includes an enforceable reciprocal obligation for the countries to adopt and maintain in their laws and practice the core internationally-recognized labor rights as stated in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including a prohibition on the worst forms of child labor. Neither Party may waive or derogate from the laws that implement this obligation in a manner affecting trade or investment. There is also an enforceable obligation to effectively enforce labor laws related to those rights and to working conditions. These labor obligations are subject to the same dispute settlement procedures and enforcement mechanisms as obligations in other Chapters of the Agreement. The Agreement also establishes a Cooperative Mechanism for the governments to develop cooperative activities aimed at promoting and advancing fundamental labor rights.

- ***Commitments and Cooperation to Protect the Environment:*** The Agreement commits parties to effectively enforce their own domestic environmental laws and adopt, maintain and implement laws, regulations, and all other measures to fulfill obligations under covered multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). All obligations in the Environment Chapter are subject to the same dispute settlement procedures and enforcement mechanisms as obligations in other Chapters of the Agreement. The Chapter calls for a public submissions process with an independent secretariat for environmental matters to ensure that views of civil society are appropriately considered. There is also an environmental cooperation agreement that provides a framework for undertaking environmental capacity building in Colombia.

- ***Trade Capacity Building: Development and Trade Together:*** The Agreement creates a Trade Capacity Building Committee, which will help Colombia build its capacity to implement the obligations of the agreement and to benefit more broadly from the opportunities it creates. Assistance programs to be discussed by the committee include, for example, programs for small and medium-sized enterprises and farmers, and programs for improvements in transportation infrastructure and telecommunications. The U.S. Government has provided a total of approximately \$150 million in trade capacity building (TCB) assistance to Colombia for the fiscal years 2004 through 2006. Colombia also benefited from U.S. Government provided trade capacity building assistance to Andean regional programs, totaling more than \$8.5 million for the same period. Multilateral lenders such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank provide additional trade-related assistance in support of the agreement.

- ***Fair and Open Government Procurement:*** U.S. suppliers are granted non-discriminatory rights to bid on contracts from a broad range of Colombian government ministries, agencies, public enterprises, and regional governments. The agreement requires the use of fair and transparent

procurement procedures, such as advance notice of purchases and timely and effective bid review procedures.

- ***An Open and Competitive Telecommunications Market:*** Users of Colombian telecom networks are guaranteed reasonable and nondiscriminatory access to the network. This prevents local firms from having preferential or “first right” of access to telecom networks. U.S. phone companies obtained the right to interconnect with Colombian dominant suppliers’ fixed networks at nondiscriminatory and cost-based rates.

- ***Increased Transparency:*** The Agreement’s dispute settlement mechanisms provide for open public hearings, public access to documents, and the opportunity for third parties to submit views. Transparency in customs operations will aid express delivery shipments and will require more open and public processes for customs rulings and administration. For custom procedures, Colombia committed to publish laws and regulations on the Internet, and will ensure procedural certainty and fairness. Colombia also committed to make public their responses to significant comments received on proposed technical regulations.

- ***Dispute Settlement:*** Core obligations, including labor and environment provisions, are subject to the dispute settlement mechanism of the agreement.



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

www.ustr.gov

Colombia: On a Path to Peace, Justice and Prosperity

“Uribe’s government has made major strides, persuading tens of thousands of combatants to lay down their arms. Murders and kidnappings, the tools of choice during the decades of lawlessness, have dropped dramatically. The result is a more stable country with a booming economy and a strong diplomatic relationship with the U.S. Moreover, Uribe stands for democracy and free markets on a continent that has veered sharply left toward state control.”

Chicago Tribune, June 23, 2007

Seven years ago, Colombia was nearly a failed state. Violence was rampant, Colombians were fleeing their country, and economic activity was plummeting. Since then, Colombia and the United States have worked together to combat violence and instability. Together we have made extraordinary strides in a few short years. U.S. assistance and tariff preferences under the Andean Trade Preference Act have been key elements of our joint strategy to promote peace, justice and prosperity. Examples of progress include:

PEACE

- **Peace Process:** Since the Colombian Government enacted the Justice and Peace Law in 2005, which set the rules under which paramilitary members would demobilize and be brought to justice, over 31,000 members from 35 paramilitary groups – principally from the AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) - have demobilized. In addition, in response to the Colombian government’s efforts to defeat the illegal groups operating within its borders, since 2002, more than 10,500 members of the far left insurgent groups FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (National Liberation Army) have chosen to individually demobilize, leaving their units and turning themselves in to Colombian authorities.
- **Steep Decline in Violence:** Through Plan Colombia, the Colombian Government stepped up its efforts to enhance territorial control and reduce violence throughout the country. As a result, since President Uribe took office in 2002, the security situation has improved significantly, with kidnappings down by 83 percent, terror attacks by 76 percent. Homicides have decreased by 40 percent and homicides against trade unionists have dropped by twice as much (over 80 percent). In 2007, the rate of homicides of unionists was less than one seventh that of the general population.
- **Protection Programs:** The Colombian government is providing protection to over 10,600 individuals. The largest protection program is run by the Ministry of Interior and Justice and provides protection to more than 9,400 individuals, including over 1,900 trade union members. Of the program’s \$39.5 million budget, one third – \$13.1 million – goes to protect trade unionists.
- **Expanded Police Presence:** As part of its effort to bring security and stability to all of its territory, Colombia has established a police presence in each of its 1,099 municipalities (equivalent to U.S. counties). Increased police presence has secured primary and secondary roads throughout

the country, freeing Colombians to travel by road without fear of attack. As a result, ridership on these roads has doubled since 2002, and commerce is flowing between areas that were once isolated by violence. To combat illegal groups, the Colombian government has established 108 new rural police stations, staffed with over 4,000 new officers.

- **Increased State Presence:** Increased security has led to real changes in people's lives. Once forced to govern from afar due to fear, mayors have returned to their communities and are working with the national government to provide state services. Colombia is once again providing judicial, community, health and education services in many areas where it was once too dangerous to do so.
- **Containing Narcotics Trafficking:** The Colombian government is continuing to battle narco trafficking, which provides the funding base for illegal armed groups. Interdiction and eradication successes have kept an average of 400 metric tons of cocaine per year from reaching the U.S. market, depriving terrorist groups of hundreds of millions in funds to buy arms and mount attacks.

JUSTICE

- **Paramilitary Ties Investigated and Prosecuted:** To ensure all persons with alleged paramilitary links are brought to justice, Colombia's judicial authorities are – with the full support of the Uribe Government – aggressively investigating and prosecuting legislators, government officials and military officers tied to such allegations.
- **AUC Leaders Under Arrest:** Twenty-three former paramilitary leaders are incarcerated in maximum security jails. The remaining senior leaders, who refused to surrender, are being sought by Colombian authorities. Former paramilitaries that commit new crimes will lose their right to reduced sentences under the Justice and Peace Law.
- **No Amnesty:** In comparison to other peace processes from Guatemala to South Africa, Colombia's process offers reduced sentences, but no amnesty, and significant reparations must be paid to victims by perpetrators. The government is prosecuting all former paramilitary members accused of serious crimes. If convicted, they will serve sentences of up to eight years.
- **Combating Impunity:** In Colombia, progress on investigation and prosecution of cases was hampered by an overburdened, outmoded criminal justice system. To combat the impunity that resulted from this old system, the country has replaced it with a new oral accusatory system under which criminal cases move from arrest to verdict in months instead of years, and conviction rates have increased from less than 3 percent to over 60 percent. To combat impunity in cases of violence against trade unionists, an independent special prosecutor's unit with a budget of \$1.5 million was established in October 2006 to rapidly investigate and prosecute 187 such priority cases, which were identified in cooperation with Colombia's trade unions and the International Labor Organization.
- **Extensive Cooperation on Extradition:** Colombia has extradited over 750 narcotics traffickers and terrorists to the United States, including over 680 since President Uribe took office in 2002.

PROSPERITY

- **Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction:** GDP per capita has almost doubled since 2002, while poverty has declined almost 20%. Unemployment is at its lowest level in a decade. Wages have risen about 10% since 2000, while inflation has dropped from about 15% to about 6%.
- **Trade Growth:** Colombia's exports to the United States grew 36% from 2000 to 2007, while U.S. exports to Colombia grew 132%.



COLOMBIA: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LASTING SUCCESS

“Just as Colombia appears poised to put decades of conflict behind it, the fate of the FTA stands as a vote of confidence in Colombia’s future.”
– Former Under Secretary for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns

With strong bipartisan support, the United States has sustained a substantial investment in Colombia’s successful struggle against narcoterrorism. Our support for Colombia’s people is bearing fruit: Colombia is turning a corner in bringing security, prosperity, and justice to its citizens. Our continued commitment will help Colombia consolidate its success by accelerating economic growth and ensuring that the government provides social services to all its citizens.

U.S. assistance through Plan Colombia and tariff preferences under the Andean Trade Preference Act are key elements of our joint strategy to promote peace, justice, and prosperity in Colombia. The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will make those preferences permanent and will give U.S. exports the same access to Colombian markets that Colombian products enjoy in the United States. These trade benefits are vital to helping Colombia emerge from a ruinous, long-running conflict. Approval of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will also show the world that the United States stands by its friends. More importantly, it will help build a dynamic, successful, and competitive region whose people can be full partners as we address the common challenges of the 21st century.

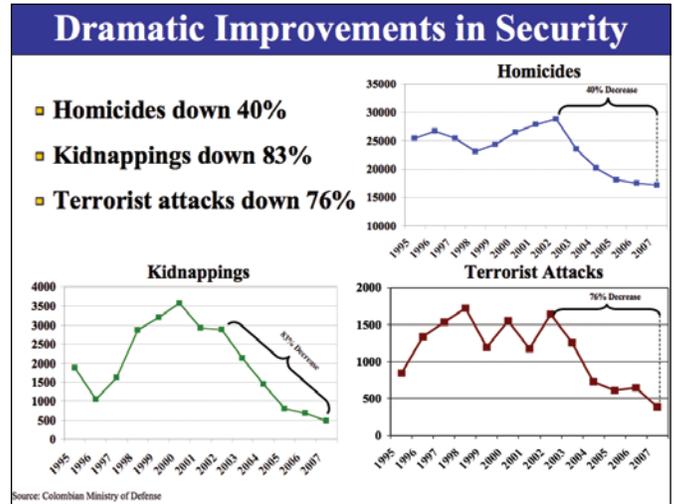
FROM NEAR FAILING STATE TO STRATEGIC PARTNER

Eight years ago, Colombia was a near failing state. Violence was rampant, citizens were fleeing the country, and economic activity was plummeting. Since then, the United States and Colombia have worked together to combat violence and instability.

Security has improved markedly. Under President Uribe, homicides have dropped by 40 percent, kidnappings by 83 percent, and terrorist attacks by 76 percent – and violence continued to plummet in 2007. Over 45,000 terrorists have demobilized – including 32,000 paramilitary members – and the FARC and ELN are



SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA



significantly weakened. Colombia is doing what no other country has attempted during a peace process, holding irregular forces accountable for their crimes.

At the same time, Colombia has laid the foundation for bringing government services to areas retaken from illegal armed groups, and increased investment in alternative development, human rights protection, and social services. Mayors have returned to their towns. Enrollment in public schools is now at 92 percent.



SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA

Drug cartels have been dismantled. Colombia has extradited over 687 criminals – mostly drug traffickers – to the United States. Cocaine production has fallen by a third, seizures of cocaine bound for the United States have more than doubled, and, while estimates differ, coca cultivation has declined. Interdiction and eradication successes have kept an average of 400 metric tons per year of cocaine from reaching the U.S. market. Alternative development programs have benefited over 135,000 families and supported over 158,000 hectares of licit crops.

Thanks in part to increased security, Colombia’s economy is rebounding and people’s lives are improving. Roads are open.

Displaced farmers are returning to their lands. Economic growth topped over 6.9 percent in 2007, the highest in eight years. Unemployment and poverty are at their lowest levels in a decade.



© AP/WWP PHOTO

“Colombia’s transformation in less than a decade from failing state to thriving democracy is one of the greatest victories for the cause of human rights in our world today.”

– Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

PRIORITIZING HUMAN RIGHTS

The United States is working closely with Colombia to promote human rights, ensure access to justice, and end impunity. Under Uribe, Colombia has come a long way in advancing these goals. Labor conditions in Colombia have significantly improved. Working with the International Labor Organization, Colombia



President Uribe with ILO President Daniel Fuenes de Rioja

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA

has enhanced its labor laws and their implementation and taken steps to protect union members and end impunity in cases of violence against them. Thanks to these measures and overall improvements in Colombia’s security

situation, according to NGO figures, homicides of trade unionists dropped over 79 percent in the last six years.

Much of this improvement has occurred because of Colombia’s protection programs for its vulnerable citizens. The Ministry of Interior and Justice’s \$39.5 million program provides protection to over 9,400 individuals. A third of this program’s budget – \$13.1 million – goes to protect more than 1,900 trade unionists.

Colombia has committed itself to ending impunity. With the historic transformation of its criminal justice system now complete, cases move from arrest to verdict in months instead of years, and conviction rates have soared from less than three percent to over 60 percent. To end the backlog of labor cases, working with the International Labor Organization, Colombia has created a \$1.5 million labor sub-unit to investigate priority cases of violence against trade unionists.

BUILDING ON PROGRESS

Colombia has designed a strategy to face the challenges of consolidating these gains by expanding state presence and government services in areas reclaimed from illegal armed groups.

While maintaining pressure on narcotics traffickers and terrorist organizations through eradication, interdiction, and extradition, the strategy outlines a plan to expand government programs in remote rural areas and puts increased emphasis on security, social services, and assistance to vulnerable groups, such as Afro-Colombians, indigenous groups, and displaced persons. It also devotes more resources to human rights and judicial reforms to end impunity in these cases. Our assistance supports these efforts and complements Colombia’s capabilities in areas such as counternarcotics. As local capacity grows, we are working with the Government of Colombia to prepare it to assume responsibility for these programs. However, bilateral assistance is only part of the solution.

“Trade fosters human opportunities that build hope and give people a stake in their society’s success.”

– Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF INSTABILITY

Colombia is a prime example of the intrinsic link between prosperity and security. To continue its progress in the long term, and create new economic alternatives to drugs and violence, Colombia needs investment, trade, and economic growth. The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is vital to supporting Colombia in its success and encouraging yet further progress. It will bring increased economic opportunity to the people of Colombia through sustained economic growth, new employment opportunities, increased investment, and by consolidating anti-corruption reforms and drawing millions into the formal economy. The 270,000 jobs it will bring to Colombians will weaken the lure of the illicit economic sector. Provisions in the agreement will reinforce democracy by fighting corruption, increasing transparency, and fostering accountability and rule of law. Through these changes, the agreement will address the underlying causes of the social ills that allow narcotraffickers and insurgent groups to operate.

COLOMBIA’S SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS

Supporting Colombia, a key U.S. ally, increases stability in our Hemisphere, thereby strengthening our security and economic interests in the region. The United States has been a proud partner in Colombia’s success and will continue to work side-by-side with the Colombian people as they further bolster their security and improve their lives. U.S. support and the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement are vital to ensuring Colombia continues on its trajectory of positive change and continues to be a steadfast strategic partner for the United States and a democratic anchor in the region. By embracing democratic governance and open markets, Colombia has made a strategic choice for a better future for its people, and needs our support in doing so. It is time for us to stand by Colombia and its people, showing our commitment to responsible democracies that seek increased engagement, partnership, and trade with the United States. ■

Charting Colombia's Progress



COLOMBIA

Near Failing State to Thriving Democracy



“Colombia’s transformation in less than a decade from failing state to thriving democracy is one of the greatest victories for the cause of human rights in our world today.”

*Secretary Condoleezza Rice,
October 9, 2007*

COLOMBIA

Plan Colombia Achievements 2000-2008

- ❑ Prevented 400 hundreds of tons of cocaine a year from reaching U.S.
- ❑ Kidnappings down by 83%, homicides 40%, terrorist attacks 76% since 2002.
- ❑ Over 46,000 terrorists demobilized under President Uribe.
- ❑ New accusatorial judicial system in place nation-wide that resolves cases in months instead of years.
- ❑ Over 5% average GDP growth for past six years; Poverty and unemployment at lowest levels in a decade.
- ❑ Over 200,000 families have benefited from alternative development programs.

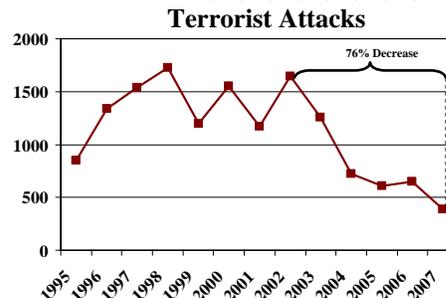
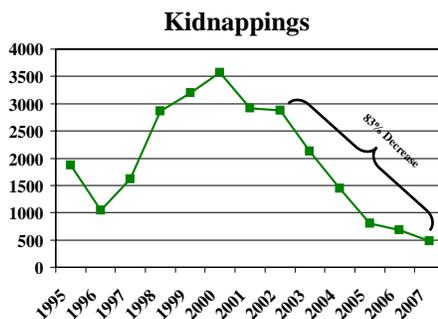


7/18/2008

COLOMBIA

Dramatic improvement in Colombia's security

- Homicides down 40%
- Kidnappings down 83%
- Terrorist attacks down 76%

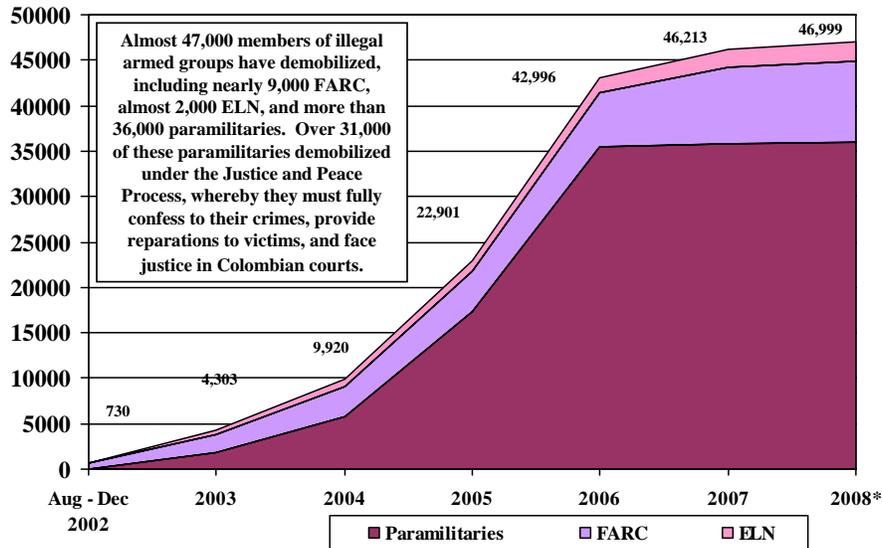


Source: Colombian Ministry of Defense

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COLOMBIA

Demobilization of Illegal Armed Groups



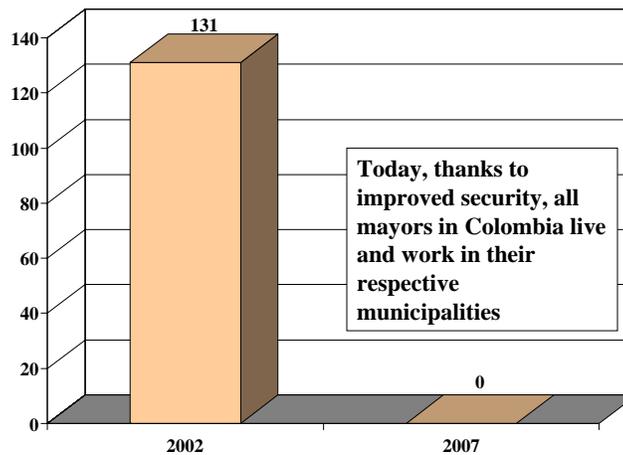
Source: Government of Colombia; *2008 figures through June

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COLOMBIA

Mayors Exercising Office Outside of Municipality

(out of 1099 municipalities)



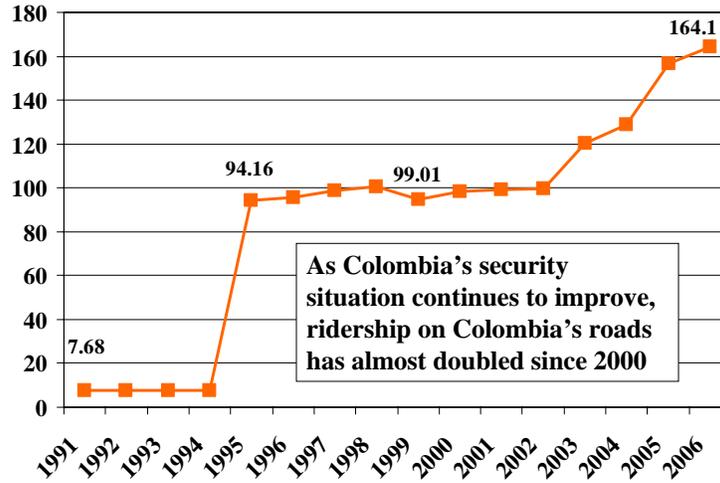
Source: Colombian Prosecutor General's Office

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COLOMBIA

Ridership on Colombian Roads

(in millions of travelers)



Source: Colombian Transportation Ministry (www.mintransporte.gov.co/servicios/estadisticas/tablasgraficos2004.htm)

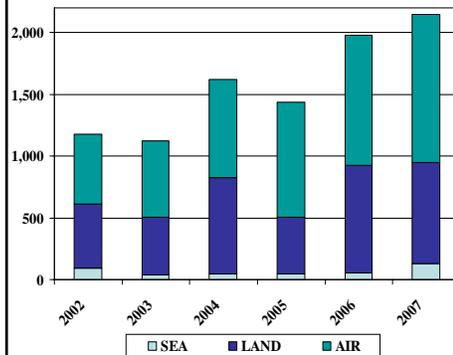
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COLOMBIA

With improved security and economic growth, the number of tourists visiting Colombia has almost doubled in the last five years

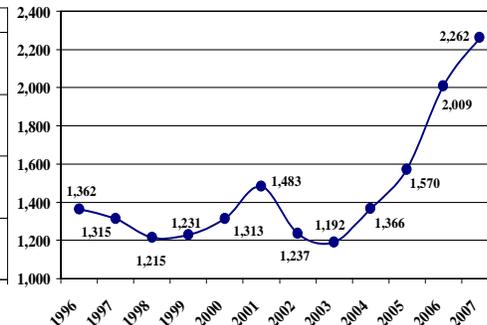
Visits by International Tourists

(in thousands of people)



Spending by International Tourists

(in millions \$US)

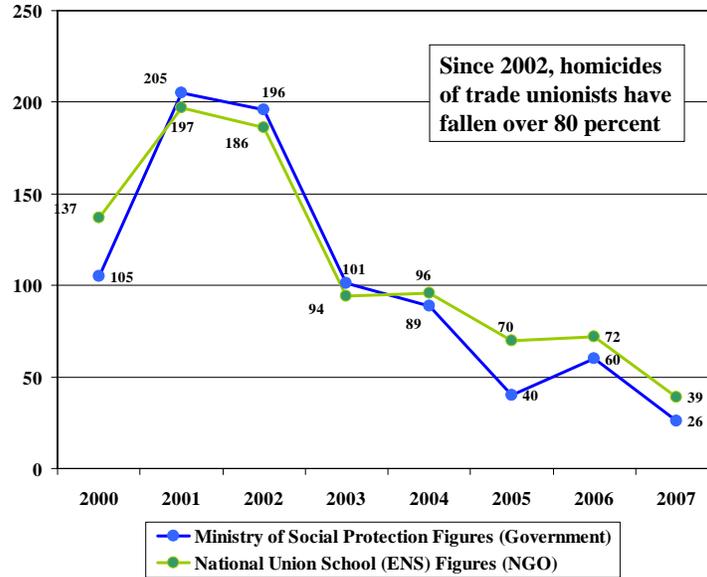


Source: Visitors – MinComercio (DAS, Bank of the Republic, and ports)
Spending – Balance of Payments, Bank of the Republic

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COLOMBIA

Homicides of Trade Unionists in Colombia

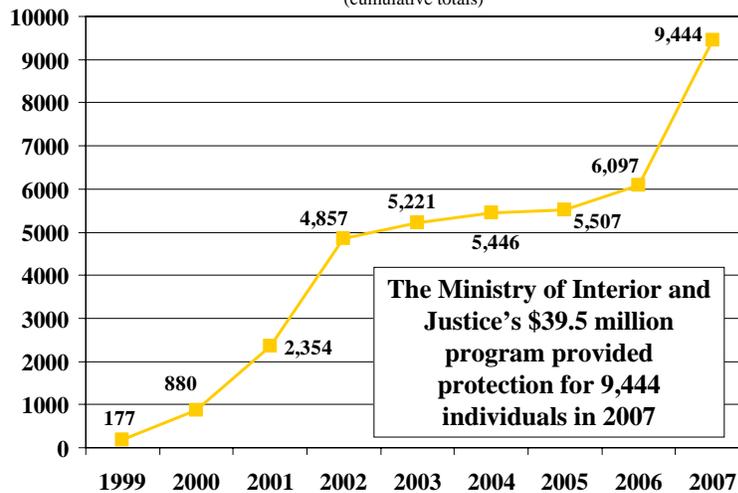


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COLOMBIA

Persons Enrolled in Protection Program

(cumulative totals)

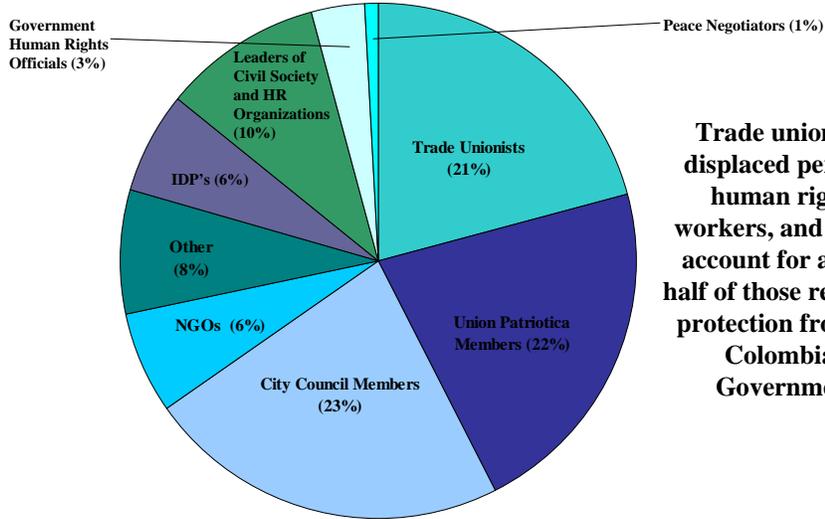


Source: Colombian Ministry of the Interior and Justice

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COLOMBIA

Groups Receiving Protection



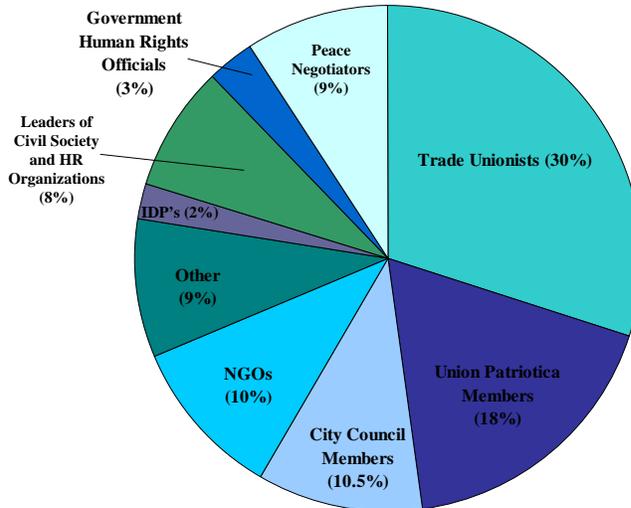
Trade unionists, displaced persons, human rights workers, and NGOs account for almost half of those receiving protection from the Colombian Government

Source: Colombian Ministry of Interior and Justice; Other = Journalists, Personeros, Mayors, Department Legislators, Witnesses, Medical Personnel, Former Mayors

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COLOMBIA

Protection Expenditures by Group



One third of the Protection Program's budget (\$13.1 million) goes to protect trade unionists

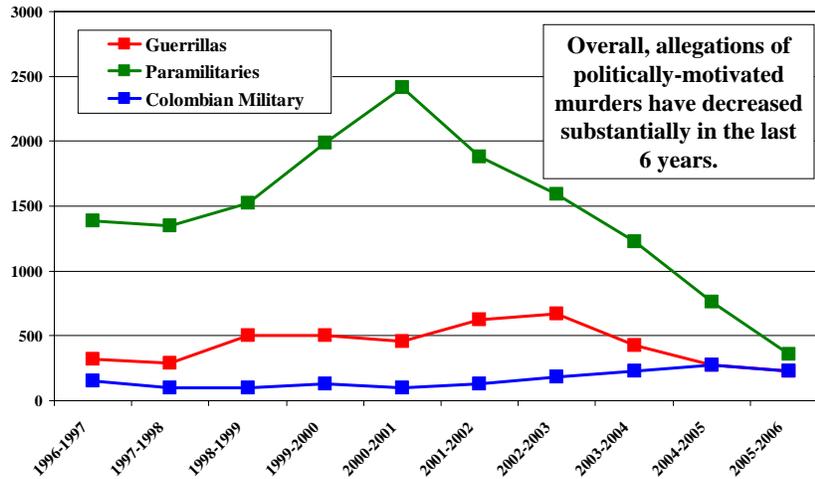
Source: Colombian Ministry of Interior and Justice; Other = Internally Displaced Persons, Journalists, Personeros, Mayors, Department Legislators, Witnesses, Medical Personnel, Former Mayors

7/18/2008

COLOMBIA

Alleged Political Killings

(according to NGO reporting based on press reports and allegations received by NGOs)

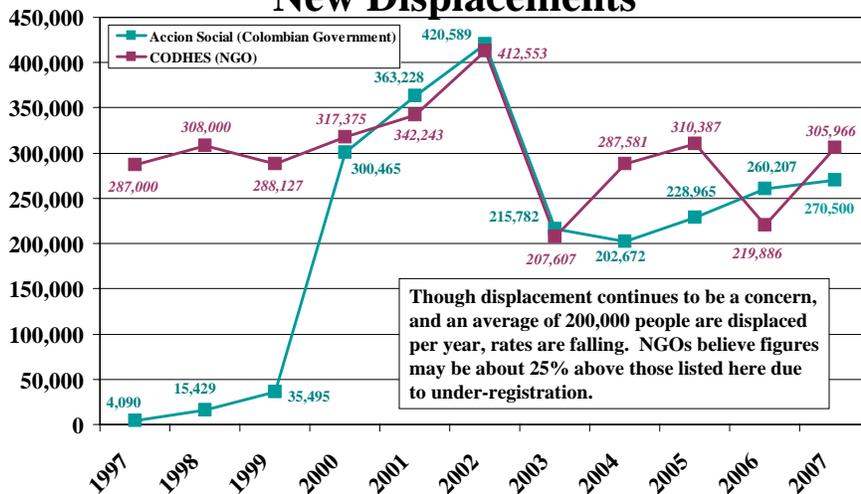


Source: Colombian NGO - Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), May 2007.
 Figures reflect data gathered from June to June of the years indicated.

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COLOMBIA

New Displacements



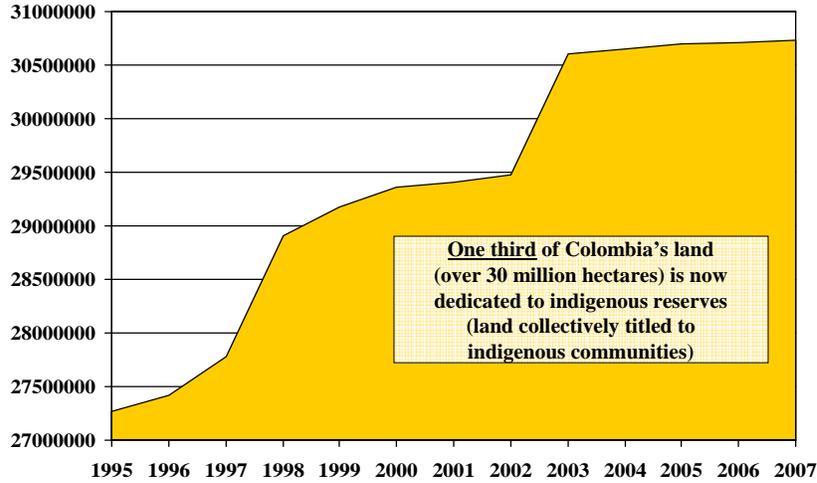
Source: Colombian Government's Acción Social General Index on Displaced Populations
[\[http://www.accionsocial.gov.co/Estadisticas/publicacion%20septiembre%203%20de%202007.htm\]](http://www.accionsocial.gov.co/Estadisticas/publicacion%20septiembre%203%20de%202007.htm) and Colombian NGO Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) [<http://www.codhes.org/Info/Boletines-graficos.htm>]

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COLOMBIA

Indigenous Reserves

(in hectares)



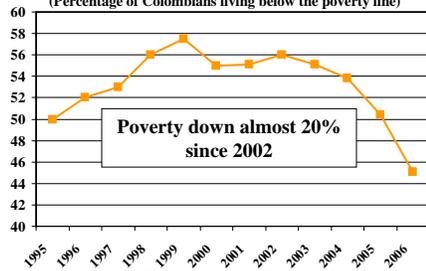
Source: Colombian Institute of Rural Development (INCODER)
30,733,851 hectares are indigenous reserves; Colombia has a total of 103,870,000 hectares within its borders

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COLOMBIA

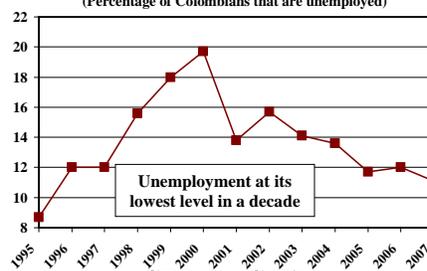
Poverty

(Percentage of Colombians living below the poverty line)



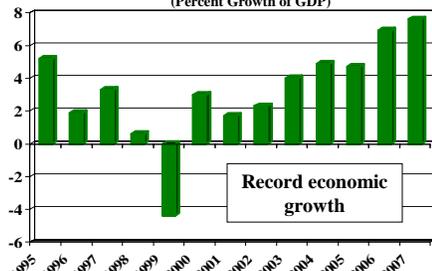
Unemployment

(Percentage of Colombians that are unemployed)



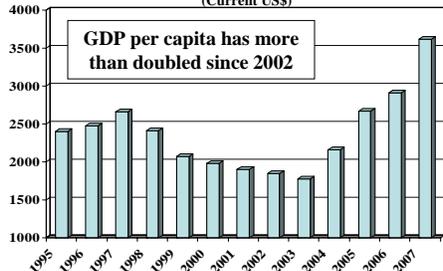
Economic Growth

(Percent Growth of GDP)



GDP Per Capita

(Current US\$)



Source: GDP Per Capita figures from International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2008; All others from Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

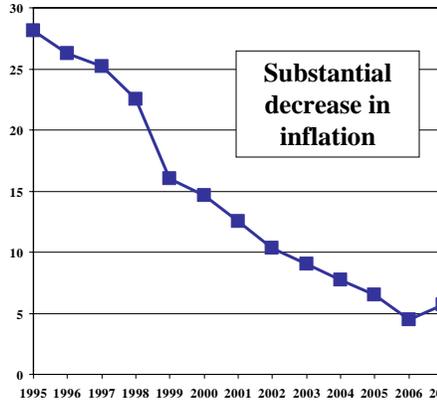
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COLOMBIA

The World Bank singled out Colombia as *one of the top ten economic reformers of 2006-2007*

Inflation

(Average Annual Percentage)



Wages

(Annual Average; 2000=100)



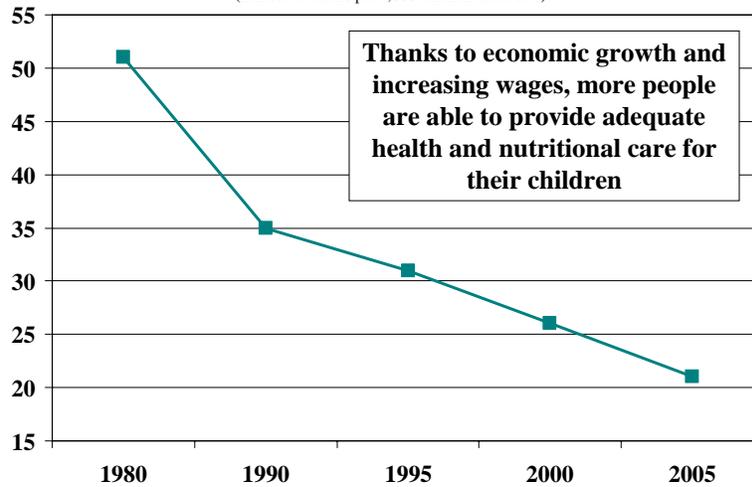
Source: Inflation figures from Inter-American Development Bank (www.iadb.org/datagob/index.htm);

Wages figures from Colombia Statistics from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (*Data through Aug) 7/18/2008

COLOMBIA

Child Mortality

(number of deaths per 1,000 children under five)



Source: UN Statistics Division

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cdb/cdb_years_on_top.asp?srlD=1220&Ct1ID=&crID=170&yrID=1980%2C1990%2C1995%2C2000%2C2005

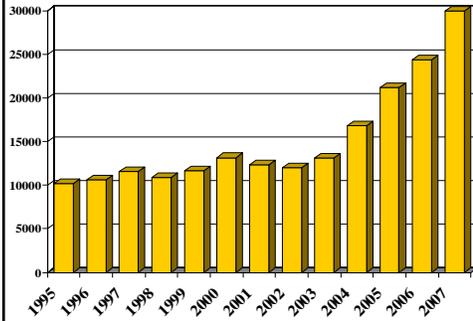
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COLOMBIA

Growing Economy, Growing Exports

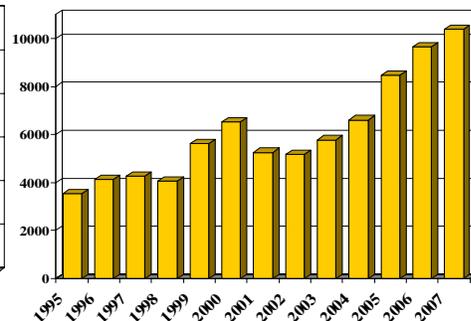
Overall Exports

(in millions of \$US)



Exports to the United States

(in millions of \$US)



Source: Government of Colombia – National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

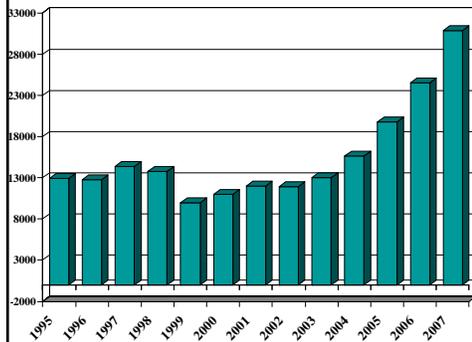
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COLOMBIA

Growing Economy, Growing Imports

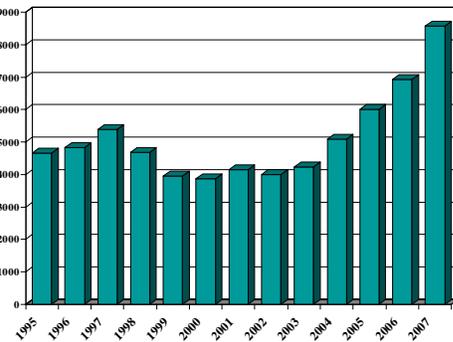
Overall Imports

(in millions of \$US)



Imports from the United States

(in millions of \$US)



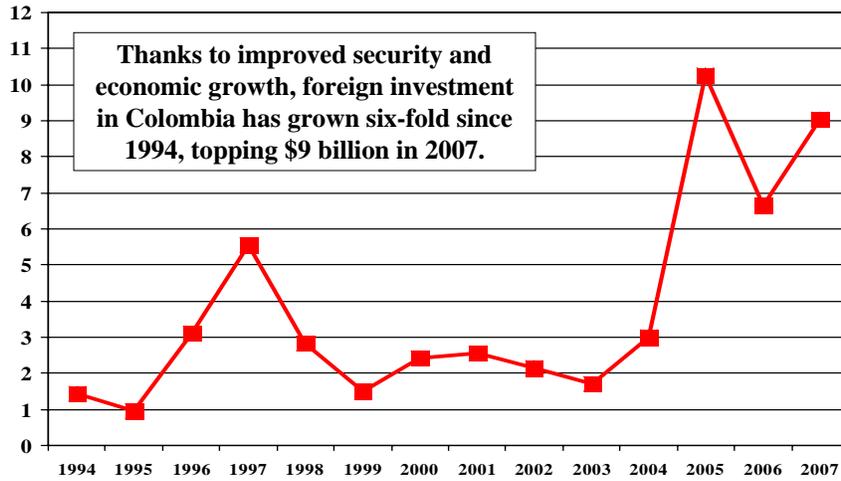
Source: Government of Colombia – National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

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COLOMBIA

Foreign Investment in Colombia

(in billions of U.S. dollars)



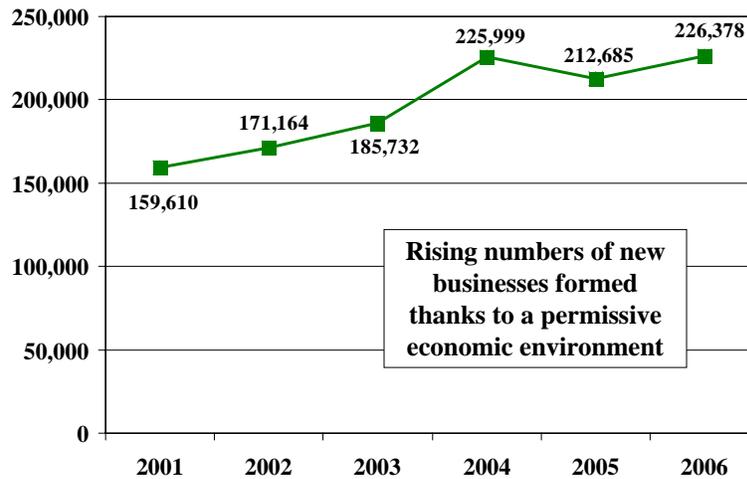
Source: Government of Colombia, Bank of the Republic

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COLOMBIA

New Businesses Formed

(total per year)

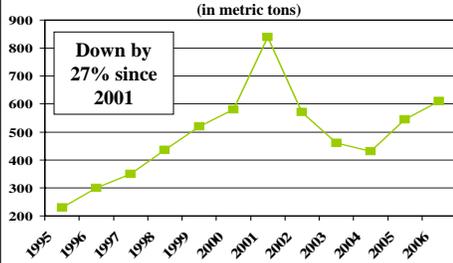


Sources: Bogota's Chamber of Commerce and Confecamaras (Colombian Association of Chambers of Commerce)

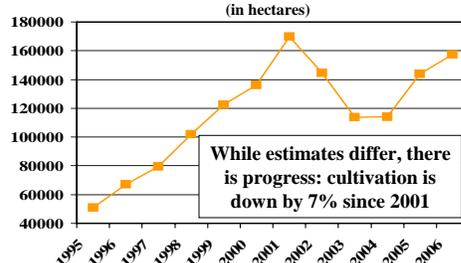
7/18/2008

COLOMBIA

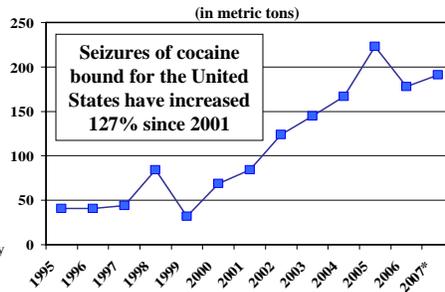
Cocaine Production



Coca Cultivation



HCL/Base Seizures



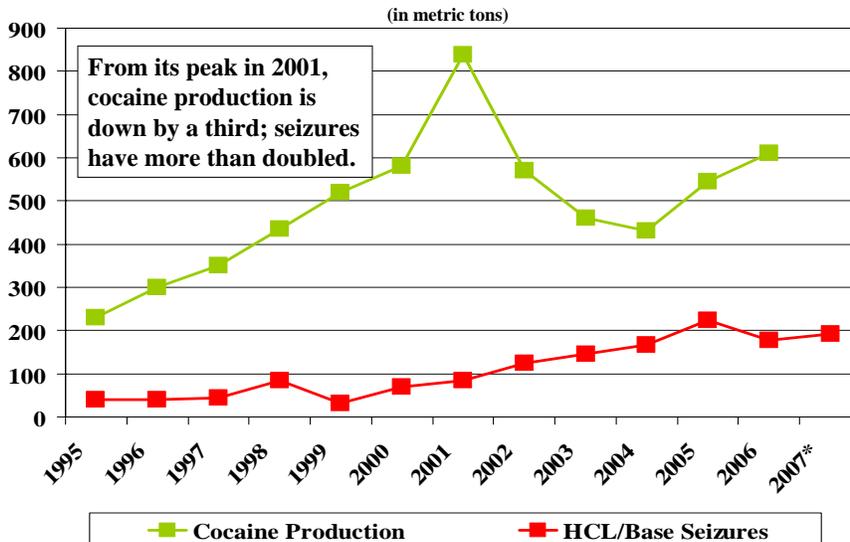
Source: Department of State International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) 2004, 2006

*2007 figures are preliminary

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Cocaine Produced and Seized



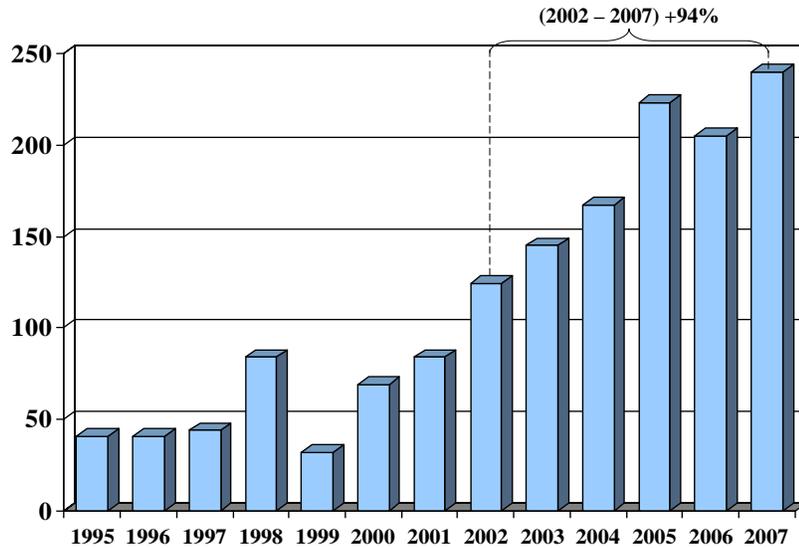
Source: Department of State International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) 2004, 2006

*2007 figures are preliminary

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COLOMBIA

Drug Laboratories Destroyed



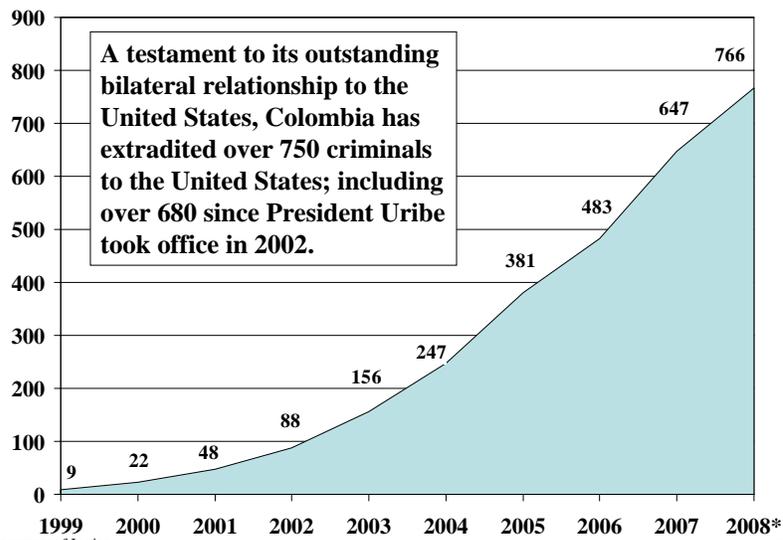
Source: Colombian Armed Forces General Command and National Police Center for Criminal Investigation

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COLOMBIA

Extraditions to the United States

(Cumulative totals of all extraditions from Colombia: Colombians, non-Colombians, and U.S. persons)



Source: U.S. Department of Justice

7/18/2008

COLOMBIA

This document is available on-line at
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/93761.pdf>

For more information on Colombia's turnaround,
visit the State Department's webpage
on Free Trade Agreements at
<http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/c22883.htm>



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

www.ustr.gov

Colombia FTA: Colombia's Labor Laws and Labor Protections

Strongest Labor Protections Ever in a Trade Agreement

As a result of the bipartisan trade deal, the labor chapter of the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement, like the agreements with Peru, Panama and Korea, goes further in incorporating labor protections into a trade agreement than previous trade agreements, by the United States or any other country. It includes:

Fundamental Labor Rights Guaranteed — Enforceable obligation to adopt and maintain in law and practice the five fundamental labor rights, as stated in the 1998 *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (ILO Declaration):

- Freedom of association;
- The effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor;
- The effective abolition of child labor and a prohibition on the worst forms of child labor; and
- The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Enforcement Ensured — Enforceable obligation to effectively enforce labor laws related to internationally recognized labor rights; includes fundamental labor rights from the ILO Declaration, plus acceptable conditions of work with respect to minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational safety and health.

Dispute Settlement Parity — Labor obligations subject to the same dispute settlement procedures and remedies as commercial obligations. Available remedies are fines and trade sanctions, based on amount of trade injury.

Colombia's laws provide for fundamental labor rights and more

- Ratified 71 ILO conventions — including all eight of the core conventions. Under Colombia's Political Constitution, ratified ILO conventions have the same legal authority as national law.
- Passed major labor law reform in 2000 addressing long-standing observations of the ILO on freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- A 2006 *Tripartite Agreement on Freedom of Association and Democracy* signed by labor confederations, employers, and the government led to the establishment of a permanent ILO presence in Colombia.

Freedom of Association

- Colombia's Constitution provides for the right to establish trade unions free from government intervention and guarantees the right to strike.

- The law provides for special legal protection for union representatives to prevent against anti-union discrimination in employment.

Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

- The law prohibits individuals from interfering with, pressuring, or limiting workers' trade union rights, including the right to freely associate.
- The law requires employers to negotiate with unions that submit legitimate requests to bargain collectively.

Prohibition on Forced Labor

- Colombia's Constitution prohibits slavery and servitude and trafficking in persons, and violations are subject to imprisonment under the penal code.
- The Inter-institutional Committee against Trafficking in Persons and various ministries have implemented a variety of anti-trafficking initiatives within Colombia. In 2006, the Government of Colombia reported 49 active investigations, 63 prosecutions, and 10 convictions related to trafficking.

Labor protections for children and a prohibition on the worst forms of child labor

- Colombia's *Código de Infancia y Adolescencia* establishes a minimum age for employment (generally 15 years of age, with limited exceptions under specified conditions) and sets hours and conditions of work for children under 18 years of age.
- The Ministry of Social Protection has established a list of the worst forms of child labor that are prohibited for all minors under age 18.
- Colombia's National Development Plan 2002-2006 establishes the eradication of exploitive child labor as a priority.

Non-discrimination in respect of employment

- The *Código Sustantivo del Trabajo* states that all workers are equal before the law and that each worker possesses the same protections and guarantees.
- The government has tasked a special unit to propose, coordinate, and evaluate policies, plans and programs of prevention, inspection, monitoring and control for the reduction of employment discrimination.

Acceptable Conditions of Work

- In 2007, Colombia raised its monthly minimum wage to \$202 (USD), a \$12 increase from 2006.
- The law requires employers to protect the security and health of their workers through the provision of proper equipment and workplaces.
- The law makes provisions for overtime work that vary according to whether workers' normal hours are daytime, night time, or mixed shifts.

Creating a Safer Environment for Unionists

Due to paramilitary demobilizations, improvements in the general security situation and a greatly expanded protection program for vulnerable groups, between 2002 and 2007 homicides in Colombia decreased by 40 percent in the country as a whole and by twice as much for union members. The Colombian government has established a special prosecutors unit and assigned three judges to pursue convictions in priority homicide cases identified by Colombia's major unions.



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

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U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement Benefits The Environment

As a result of the bipartisan trade deal, the environment chapter of the U.S. –Colombia Free Trade Agreement, like the agreements with Peru, Panama and Korea, goes further in incorporating environmental obligations into a trade agreement than any previous trade agreement, by the United States or any other country. It includes obligations to implement key multilateral environmental agreements in areas such as endangered species protection and marine pollution prevention.

Highlights of Environmental Accomplishments of the CFTA

First Ever Obligations to Implement Key Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs):

The CFTA includes obligations to implement and enforce several important MEAs, such as those covering trade in endangered species, production of ozone depleting substances, and conservation of wetlands. The implementation and enforcement of the international environmental standards in these MEAs are subject to the CFTA's dispute settlement procedures, which include the possibility of trade sanctions for violations.

Obligations to Maintain Robust Domestic Environmental Protections: The CFTA requires the Parties to pursue high levels of environmental protection, effectively enforce their laws, and not derogate from these laws to encourage increased trade or investment.

Specific Provision for Protection of Biodiversity: Colombia is one of the few mega-diverse countries in the world and the CFTA specifically recognizes the priority placed on protecting and conserving that diversity.

Innovative Public Submissions Mechanism to Empower Civil Society: The CFTA establishes an independent secretariat to receive complaints that a Party is not effectively enforcing its environmental laws and provides for the possibility of "factual records" to respond to credible complaints.

A Comprehensive Approach to Environmental Protection: Parties are to ensure that procedural guarantees exist to provide for fair, equitable and transparent proceedings for the administration and enforcement of environmental laws and to complement such guarantees with voluntary, market-based mechanisms to protect the environment.

Capacity Building through Cooperation: A parallel Environmental Cooperation Agreement provides a framework for identifying specific capacity-building needs in Colombia and establishing relevant projects, with civil society input, to address those needs.



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
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Significant Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Improvements

The Colombia IPR chapter contributes to a broad strengthening of Colombia's IPR protection and enforcement and thereby represents a significant boost for U.S. commercial interests. The chapter accomplishes the Trade Promotion Authority objectives regarding promotion of adequate and effective protection of IPR reflecting standards of protection similar to those found in U.S. law. The Agreement also incorporates provisions reflecting full respect for the 2001 Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health.

Key IPR Accomplishments of the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)

State-of-the-Art Protection for U.S. Trademarks

CFTA contains a number of elements that will strengthen Colombia's protection of U.S. trademarks. Colombia is required to develop an on-line system for registration and maintenance of trademarks.

Colombia will also develop a system to resolve disputes about trademarks used in internet domain names. The agreement also advances the U.S. policy objective of ensuring that the first person who acquires a right to a trademark or a geographical indication is the person who has the right to use it.

Protection for Copyrighted Works in a Digital Economy

In addition to ensuring extended terms of protection for copyright-protected works, the CFTA will foster Colombia's adherence to disciplines that reflect the realities of copyright in a digital age.

Under the terms of the agreement, Colombia will establish strong anti-circumvention provisions to prohibit tampering with technologies designed to prevent piracy and unauthorized distribution of songs, movies or other works over the internet. CFTA also ensures that Colombia's government must use only legitimate computer software, and establishes that copyright owners maintain rights over temporary copies of their works on computers.

The agreement also will help prevent piracy of satellite television programming, and sets out rules for the liability of Internet Service Providers for copyright infringement, reflecting the balance struck in the U.S. Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Patents & Test Data: Stronger Protections

The CFTA will significantly strengthen Colombia's basis for protecting patents and test data.

The agreement limits the grounds for revoking patents, provides protection for newly developed plant varieties, and sets out rules for protecting test data submitted in connection with marketing approval for medicines and agricultural chemicals.

The CFTA also requires the establishment of procedures and remedies to prevent the marketing of pharmaceutical products that infringe patents. The IPR protections in the agreement incorporate flexibilities aimed at ensuring that Colombia can strike an appropriate balance that promotes both pharmaceutical innovation and access to medicines.

Tough Penalties for Piracy and Counterfeiting

The CFTA criminalizes end-user piracy, providing strong deterrence against piracy and counterfeiting. The agreement will also require Colombia to authorize the seizure, forfeiture, and destruction of counterfeit and pirated goods, and will also strengthen enforcement by providing for ex officio action in border and criminal cases.



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

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The United States - Colombia FTA Protects U.S. Ports

The United States - Colombia Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) explicitly clarifies the right of the United States to take any measure it considers necessary to protect national security in relation to U.S. ports or other sectors.

Standard Provisions Regarding Port Services

- The United States - Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) commits each party (subject to specified exceptions) to treat service suppliers and investors of the other party no less favorably than it treats its own service suppliers and investors.
- With respect to “landside aspects of port activities,” the United States is obligated to provide Colombian service suppliers and investors such treatment only to the extent that Colombia provides “comparable market access” to U.S. service suppliers and investors. (The United States made virtually identical commitments in the NAFTA and in the free trade agreements with Australia, Bahrain, Central America and the Dominican Republic, Chile, Morocco, and Oman.)

Full and Explicit Discretion to Protect U.S. National Security

- The United States maintains full discretion under the FTA to take actions to protect the national security. In particular, under the FTA’s “essential security” exception (which all our agreements contain), no provision of the FTA prevents us from applying measures that we consider necessary to protect our essential security.
- This exception is self-judging. The applicability of the exception turns on what the United States considers necessary to protect our essential security, not on a tribunal’s assessment of our essential security. Neither an investor/state arbitration tribunal nor a state/state dispute settlement panel has any authority to second-guess the United States’ assessment of its essential security needs.
- The Colombia FTA further clarifies the self-judging nature of the essential security exception and its application to ports. Specifically, the FTA includes language clarifying that “measures relating to the landside aspects of port activities are subject to the application of [the essential security exception].” A footnote to the essential security exception stipulates that if a party invokes the exception in dispute settlement, “the tribunal or panel hearing the matter shall find that the exception applies.”



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

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Broad Support For U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

What They're Saying:

“... Colombia alone is a market of 42 million people, larger than California and equal in population to the six Central American countries included in DR-CAFTA. And like in 2005, we know the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will significantly benefit American workers and farmers.”

- Rep. Jerry Weller (IL), *Op-ed in The Hill, September 12, 2008*

“... We can strengthen Colombia through the commercial relationship represented by our pending trade agreement. The agreement will help create jobs for U.S. workers and farmers by making our products more competitive in Colombia. In return, we make permanent the benefits we have been providing to Colombia since 1991. In so doing, we help Colombia achieve the economic development it needs to provide jobs and opportunities to its citizens.”

- Ambassador Charles Shapiro (Senior Coordinator for Western Hemisphere Free Trade Agreements at the U.S. Department of State and a former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela),
Op-ed in The Philadelphia Inquirer, August 11, 2008

“The most important argument in favor of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is that it is manifestly good for the United States and our interests. The most obvious benefit is expanded trade.... But this free-trade agreement is about more than economics. It is essential to securing U.S. strategic interests in this Hemisphere.”

- Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL), *Op-ed in National Review, August 11, 2008*

“And yet among the many missed opportunities of this Congress thus far, the stalled Colombian Trade Agreement stands head over the shoulders over other legislative gridlocks. It shows how poisonous politics has been killing sensible and fair-minded policy. The proposed trade deal with Colombia is a relatively modest proposal to correct an unfair one-way trade policy with one of our strongest allies in South America. But it's far from modest when you consider Colombia's dramatic turn-around -- from being a hotbed of violence and crime to the stable democracy and growing economy that it is today.”

- Israel Ortega, Senior Media Services Associate at The Heritage Foundation,
Op-ed in El Diaro, August 11, 2008

“Passing this trade agreement will be a culmination and realization of our partnership with Colombia. It will help the Colombian government and people to lock in their democratic and economic reforms. It will signal that Colombia, like a growing number of our fellow democracies in the Americas today, is a reliable place to invest and poised to compete effectively in the global economy. It will affirm that the future of our hemisphere belongs to democratic citizens, of the left and the right, who want their elected leaders to govern justly and lawfully, to expand economic freedom and trade, and to invest in their people.

And it will send a message across the world that the United States will honor the promises we make to our friends and allies.”

- *Condoleezza Rice (U.S. Secretary of State), Op-ed in Real Clear Politics, July 24, 2008*

“The remarkable transformation of the security situation in Colombia can be credited in large part to the improvement in the capacity of its military and police — an improvement in which American security assistance has played a key role.... Furthermore, we should also increase trade and investment by moving forward on the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement that is now before Congress. Growing prosperity and better standards of living are indispensable to achieving lasting stability in both countries.”

- *Robert M. Gates (secretary of defense) and Juan Manuel Santos (Colombia’s minister of defense), Op-ed in New York Times, July 23, 2008*

“Those who assail our country's trade policies as the cause of our widening trade deficit are taking aim at the wrong target. It is not free trade agreements, but constraints on domestic energy production that are the root cause. There are two useful steps policymakers can take to help lower the U.S. trade deficit. First, there are currently three negotiated FTAs awaiting action on Capital Hill (Colombia, Korea and Panama). Passing these agreements will lower tariff barriers faced by U.S. manufacturers, expand exports and create good paying jobs for working Americans. Congress should approve these agreements this year.”

- *John Engler (President and CEO of National Association of Manufacturers), Op-ed in Industry Week, July 22, 2008*

“Congress has a golden opportunity to do more by passing pending FTAs with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. Combined, these three countries have nearly 100 million consumers with a gross domestic product of more than \$1 trillion. These important agreements deserve to be passed as quickly as possible. Our FTAs do more than enhance trade - they also strengthen the rule of law, encourage stability and promote social justice. Nowhere is this more important than Colombia, one of our staunchest allies in our hemisphere.”

- *Carlos Gutierrez (U.S. Secretary of Commerce) Op-ed in Savannah Morning News, July 20, 2008*

“The freeing of these hostages, along with the death last March of Manuel Marulanda, the long-time leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, provides a defining strategic opportunity for the US Congress to approve the pending US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.”

- *Marc Grossman (Vice Chairman of The Cohen Group, former Undersecretary of State for political affairs 2001-2005), Op-ed in Boston Globe, July 10, 2008*

“Members of the U.S. Congress need to step forward, put party politics aside and vote in favor of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Act. Colombia gave three U.S. families the best Independence Day celebration ever. We need to step up and show this nation's commitment to our allies and free Colombia, before November.”

- *Lt. Col. Kilroy Jr., (U.S. Army-retired, teaches international studies at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington), Op-ed in Roanoke Times, July 10, 2008*

“... Congress passed the Peru agreement in December. The Colombia agreement was sent to Congress in April and is a hostage of partisan politics. Once it is passed, Panama will be next in line for congressional consideration. Jobs for American workers are too important to fall victim to politics as usual. More than 100 papers nationwide have published editorials supporting the Colombia agreement. It's time for Congress to put aside partisan bickering and approve the Colombia agreement now. American workers need those jobs.”

- *Ambassador Charles Shapiro (Senior Coordinator for Western Hemisphere Free Trade Agreements at the U.S. Department of State and a former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela), Op-ed in Lexington Herald – Leader, June 17, 2008*

“Colombian President Alvaro Uribe The outcry has been astonishing. On April 10, the House of Representatives voted to shelve the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. Since then, people from all walks of life — across the United States and throughout the Americas — have urged Congress to reverse course and approve the agreement.... The House vote was mystifying because approval of this “fair trade” agreement is overwhelmingly in the interests of American workers and farmers. In equal measure, the agreement is critical to the foreign policy interests of the United States in the strategically important Andean region.

- *Daniel W. Christman (senior vice president for international affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), Op-ed in Kansas Morning Star, June 8, 2008*

“... Meanwhile, our venerable House of Representatives, in the context of the Colombia agreement, has recklessly changed the rules for congressional action on trade legislation. By rejecting long-settled procedures that prevented congressional sidetracking of trade deals negotiated by presidents, the House has hamstrung U.S. trade policy and created the gravest threat to the global trading system in decades.

“.... It would help if Congress and the present administration could pick up the pieces and pass the Colombia agreement, and the pending Korea and Panama agreements as well. But the fundamental problem of U.S. international credibility on trade will remain until a foolproof Trade Promotion Authority, or some equivalent successor, is renewed in perpetuity.”

- *C. Fred Bergsten (director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics), Op-Ed in Wall Street Journal, May 20, 2008*

“Pointless politics threatens a pact with Colombia that would aid U.S. manufacturers... I resent the obstruction of trade just for the sake of politics and without regard to the economic and diplomatic costs. Witness how Congress is waylaying the free-trade agreement with Colombia, perhaps the best friend the U.S. has in Latin America. For a reputationally damaged U.S., this might be the last piece of low-hanging foreign policy fruit out there—no troop surges, no 11th-hour hustling at the U.N.—and it's withering on the vine.... So why not have a straight up-down vote in Congress? Maybe because the pact might well pass—thus blessing the bogey of free trade in a downbeat election year. It's procedural punting. Kabuki concern. Potemkin protectionism. And really no way to treat a friend. “

- *Robert Farzard (BusinessWeek Senior Writer who covers Wall Street and international finance), Op-Ed in Business Week, May 19, 2008*

“... I believe the benefits of trade are the best kept secret of our economy. While removing unfair trade barriers won't cure all of our economic struggles, it will foster job creation and economic growth here at home. Congress should reject economic isolationism and pass the Colombia FTA without further delay.

- *Rep. Wally Herger (R-Chico, represents the 2nd Congressional District and serves as the ranking member of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade) Op-Ed in Redding Record-Searchlight, May 16, 2008*

“But for governors and state legislators across the country, CFTA's apparent defeat represents a missed opportunity to grow their state economies. States are struggling with their bottom lines and the demands for their resources. Growing jobs, attracting investment, and boosting exports are sure-fire ways to improve the situation.

“... Economic development is a bipartisan priority. For struggling states, it's the only priority. Congress would do well to remember that there is a country beyond the Beltway, and that not all of us share a zeal for political drama. It's time to reconsider and pass the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

- *Sen. Kevin Coughlin (R-Cuyahoga Falls, is an Ohio State senator, representing Summit County, and co-chair of the Council of State Government's International Committee), Op-Ed in The Times-Gazette, May 13, 2008*

“... Critics of liberalization often tell us trade is not a level playing field: Look at the deficit, we buy more from them than they buy from us. The Colombia agreement is exactly the kind of deal that would address those fears. The U.S. currently imports most goods from Colombia duty-free, and Congress approves those conditions every year. By making those preferences permanent and bilateral, the deal would allow American exports to enter Colombia duty-free. So there's no reason to hold up the agreement on the grounds that it threatens jobs.

“... The fact is that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States. U.S. exporters employ millions of Americans, and they all share an interest in selling their goods abroad. All the more so with the dollar as weak as it is. But still the Democrats in Congress refuse to work with the White House to pass significant trade deals. How long will we have to wait for that new era of cooperation?

- *Sallie James (trade-policy analyst at the Cato Institute), Op-Ed in National Review Online, May 12, 2008*

“... About \$750 million worth of exports to Colombia already flow through the port of Jacksonville each year - the agreement is expected to increase exports by 40 percent. According to Gov. Charlie Crist, a strong supporter of the agreement, that translates to an increase of \$161 million and 1,700 new jobs. This agreement is not just about free trade, but fair trade. Right now, 92 percent of Colombia's exports come here duty-free, while U.S. goods, especially agricultural products, exported to Colombia face tariffs up to 35 percent.”

- *Rep. Ander Crenshaw (FL) Op-Ed in the Florida Times-Union, May 9, 2008*

“... The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement before Congress provides tremendous opportunities for Kansas and other exporters in the United States... With more than 95 percent of the world's population living outside the U.S., it's vital to continue expansion of international trade. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement has turned into a long, uphill climb, made worse by the hard line of the House leadership. Congress should take the correct action.

- *Steve Baccus (president of Kansas Farm Bureau) Op-Ed in Kansas City Star, May 8, 2008*

“One month ago, on April 10, the House of Representatives voted to shelve the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, tossing aside Congressional rules dating back to 1974 that ensure an up-or-down vote on trade agreements. Since then, people from all walks of life — across the United States and throughout the Americas — have urged Congress to reverse course and approve the agreement. Their reasons are simple: This “fair trade” agreement is overwhelmingly in the interests of American workers, and it's critical to the foreign policy interests of the United States.

“... The case for approval is strong. By sweeping aside trade barriers, the agreement will offer significant new opportunities to working Americans on factory floors as well as Colombians rescuing their nation

from drug violence. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that American workers and farmers will see more than \$4 billion in new sales to Colombia.

“...The House should free this agreement from legislative limbo, give it the up-or-down vote it deserves, and approve the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.”

- *John Murphy (vice president for international affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), Op-Ed in Roll Call, May 8, 2008*

“... Congress should ratify the Colombia agreement. Leveling the playing field for our exporters should be reason enough. But our interest in Colombia’s success makes the case all the more pressing. A stronger, more prosperous Colombia will be better positioned to combat the thugs who brutalize her people and the narco-trade that corrupts people well beyond her borders.”

- *Rod Hunter (a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, served as a senior director at the National Security Council under President Bush) Op-Ed in New York Sun, May 7, 2008*

“... As the excuses for inaction on the CTPA [Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement] become more and more transparent, let’s hope those members of Congress who put the U.S. national interest in a stable, secure, democratic Colombia ahead of union protectionism and partisan pork-barrel politics will rescue Mrs. Pelosi’s CTPA ‘hostage.’”

- *G. Philip Hughes (senior director at the White House Writers Group, ambassador to Barbados & the Eastern Caribbean) and J. Paul Johnson, J.D. (associate at the Writers Group, adviser to the Centro de Estudios Americanos), Op-ed in Washington Times, May 5, 2008*

“...Trade with Colombia is important to South Florida and our nation as Colombia is among the top 10 trading partners with Port Everglades. It is imperative that Congress approve the trade agreement with Colombia now. It is thought by some that the delay in approving the agreement is to punish President Bush.”

- *Jim Naugle (mayor of Fort Lauderdale) Op-Ed in South Florida Sun Sentinel, May 5, 2008*

“... Expanding free trade would provide American companies with new opportunities to grow; therefore, it is critical Congress approve pending trade agreements with nations like Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. But unfortunately, Speaker Pelosi has allowed politics to trump free trade at the expense of our economic and national security.”

- *Sen. Jon Kyl (AZ), Op-Ed in Casa Grande Dispatch on May 1, 2008*

“... It is a shame that Speaker Pelosi is playing politics with a vital trade agreement. The Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement should be passed immediately. It would be both an economic and a diplomatic disaster for the United States should Congress fail to ratify it. We can ill-afford such high-handed political maneuvers.”

- *Paul M. Weyrich (Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation) Op-Ed in The National Ledger, April 30, 2008*

“... It's hard to see how it is a disadvantage to American companies and workers to have a two-way deal where exports will flow into Colombia tariff-free, and encourage the progress in Colombia.”

- *Jonathan Riskind (chief of The Dispatch Washington bureau) Op-Ed in The Columbus Dispatch, April 27, 2008*

“... Last week, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives indefinitely blocked a vote on the pending Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Their action sends the wrong message to trade partners around the world and squanders an opportunity to help Americans shouldering the burden of unemployment and a stalling economy. Indeed, failure to ratify the FTA with Colombia denies economic growth opportunities for both the United States and Colombia, stifles competition, and undermines efforts

to create a safer, more stable world.... The United States has an opportunity to bolster our economy, reaffirm our position as a global leader, and to build the diplomatic relationships that will help keep us safe. The time to move forward and ratify the Colombia FTA is now. Congress' failure to consider the pact cannot be justified."

- *Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (Chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee), Op-Ed in The Citizen, April 26, 2008*

"... Colombia is the United States' largest market in South America. This agreement will level the playing field for California's industries and help them to compete better with other countries that export goods to Colombia. ... If the agreement takes effect, California stands to gain billions in new business opportunities by removing costly tariffs that put our goods at a disadvantage and keep many Colombian consumers from buying our products. Unfortunately, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently refused to allow a vote in Congress on the Colombian trade agreement. Instead of representing California's best economic interest, Pelosi is playing partisan politics."

- *Mike Villines (Assembly Republican leader of Clovis) Op-Ed in Modesto Bee, April 24, 2008*

"I've worked in politics long enough to know that when politicians spend too much time locked in partisan conflict, they can forget what they were fighting about in the first place. Unfortunately, this may be happening with the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

"The White House and Congress have reached an impasse. As a result, an economically and geopolitically important agreement is hanging in the balance. If our leaders in Congress don't change their approach, a critical building block for stability in an important region of South America may fall victim to domestic partisan squabbling."

- *James A. Baker III (Former Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush) Op-Ed in Wall Street Journal on April 23, 2008*

"... By ratifying this agreement, we would open an important market for American goods. We would demonstrate to millions in our hemisphere that the path to prosperity lies in freedom and democracy. And we would give strong moral support to a leader struggling to bring hope and opportunity to his people in an important part of the world. Everyone knows this, Democrats as well as Republicans. Yet House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has effectively put off the bill by not scheduling a vote. We need to make clear to the leadership in Congress what killing this trade deal would mean. Throughout Colombia, a defeat for the trade deal would be confirmation that the U.S. is not an ally you can count on. Throughout Latin America, a defeat for the trade deal would be exploited by thugs like Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, who would tell the people, "See, the Americans will never accept you as equals and partners." And throughout the world, a defeat for the trade deal would be taken as another sign that the U.S. will not stand by its friends when the going gets tough."

- *Rupert Murdoch (chairman and CEO of News Corp.), Op-ed in Wall Street Journal, April 22, 2008*

"... We believe the Colombia trade agreement is good for our national security and foreign policy as well as for our economy. More important than the deadlock on this agreement itself is that it illustrates how far the United States has strayed from the path of bipartisan commitment to free trade. Global trade has been and remains vital to the U.S. economy. The extraordinary economic growth after World War II was, in large part, due to the fact that the United States opened itself up to the world. Thoughtful political leaders of both parties understood trade's importance, and chose to subordinate politics to trade. The challenge was always to mitigate harm to some impacted sectors while expanding trade.... We need to recognize that trade policy is too important to be subjected to political whims and to insulate it from politics. Trade agreements need to be debated and voted on according to the merits of the agreement - not according to electoral advantage. To borrow the words of House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles

Rangel, we must get back to a point where ‘the facts on the ground’ once again matter more than ‘the politics in the air.’ The politics in the air need to be inspected and potentially grounded - that is, grounded in sound economic judgment and by the broader U.S. goals for the future.”

- *Ed Black (president and CEO of the Computer & Communications Industry Association),
Op-Ed in San Jose Mercury News, April 21, 2008*

“By refusing to allow a vote on a free-trade agreement with Colombia, Democrat leaders in the House have come down on the wrong side of the struggle to promote liberty in the Americas.... President Uribe's actions since taking office and the dramatic results he has shown should demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt his commitment to freedom, security and democracy in Colombia. If the Democrat Congress rejects this worthwhile agreement and Colombia slips back toward drug-fueled anarchy, it will bear much of the blame. For the sake of a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic hemisphere, Congress should vote on and approve this important trade agreement.”

- *Daniel Griswold (director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute),
Op-Ed in Pittsburg Tribune Review, April 18, 2008*

“... As a matter purely of economics, what Mrs. Pelosi has done is insane. Our trade with Colombia is both relatively small potatoes (\$18 billion last year compared to nearly \$4 trillion with the rest of the world), and is favorable to us. Thanks to a prior agreement (the Andean Trade Preference Act of 1991) most Colombian imports already enter the U.S. duty-free. The goods we ship to Colombia are subject to tariffs of up to 80 percent. The treaty would eliminate those tariffs altogether.... But the harm Mrs. Pelosi has done will go far beyond the jobs that will be lost at Caterpillar and other U.S. firms that would benefit from the Colombian free trade deal. Colombia is both our closest and most important ally in Latin America.”

- *Jack Kelly (syndicated columnist, former deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force in the Reagan administration, national security writer for the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Post-Gazette,
Op-ed in Washington Times, April 17, 2008*

“House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's recent decision to kill the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, at least for now, sacrifices an issue of enormous national strategic importance at the altar of the bitter partisan politics that have become all too common in today's Washington. She would be well-advised to reconsider. Her action not only will weaken America's posture around the world, it also will revive fears that the Democratic Party cannot be trusted to manage U.S. national security at a time of rising global challenges.”

- *Lawrence J. Haas (former communications director to Vice President Gore, vice president of the Committee on the Present Danger), Op-Ed in The Examiner, April 17, 2008*

“... After six years of amazing progress, Mr. Uribe's Colombia deserves a reward for its efforts, not a lecture from American politicians pandering to anti-trade sentiment. Providing Colombia with more foreign investment and permanent access to the U.S. market would help both American companies and Colombian workers. It would also solidify America's relationship with a vital regional partner. We should remember that Plan Colombia was originally a bipartisan initiative started by the Clinton administration. It is distressing that the U.S.-Colombia FTA has failed to garner similar support. By blocking a vote on the FTA, House members have sent a terrible signal to American allies. They have put narrow partisan interests ahead of a broader national interest. Let's hope it is not too late for Mrs. Pelosi and other top Democrats to reverse the course.”

- *Jaime Daremblum (director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the Hudson Institute),
Op-Ed in The New York Sun, April 16, 2008*

“... Democrats in Congress should withdraw their resistance to this trade agreement, recognizing its potential to contribute to investment, growth, and job creation in Colombia. These, after all, are the key

ingredients of development success that elsewhere, when combined with democratic governance, have been the best insurance against human rights abuses and poor enforcement of labor and environmental standards. That can take us over the rather significant hump now facing us regarding the signal we send to our neighbors not only in Colombia but all over Latin America. A delay on the vote or, even worse, voting the agreement down would not only put Colombia's progress at risk, it would also put at risk a generation of productive bipartisan US policy in Latin America.”

- *Nancy Birdsall (president of the Center for Global Development) and Susan Segal (president and CEO of the Council of the Americas), Op-Ed in Christian Science Monitor, April 14, 2008*

“... I recently toured Colombia with U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab and saw firsthand how a U.S. partnership with the brave people of Colombia, and their visionary leaders, has begun to bear fruit.... The Colombia agreement is supported by a cross section of the manufacturing community, who see the economic impacts as minimal for some and outright beneficial for others. I hope Speaker Pelosi will reconsider her ill-advised decision to change the rules of the House of Representatives to delay a vote on this important agreement. It is vital to America’s economic and security interests, while providing a swift, stinging, and powerful blow to enemies like Chavez and Castro.”

- *Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Op-Ed in National Review, April 14, 2008*

“At a time when our national economy is struggling with sky-rocketing gas prices and a slowing job market, the House Democratic majority chose to indefinitely delay the Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a bill that would make it easier for American businesses and workers to compete globally.... This partisan stunt hurts American workers, farmers, and businesses by denying them access to new markets. This trade agreement deserves an up-or-down vote.”

- *Representative Jo Bonner, Op-Ed in Brewton Standard, April 14, 2008*

“... The agreement is now in the hands of Congress, and it has the opportunity to show the world that America will not turn inward. Decisive, bipartisan action by Congress would help strengthen American competitiveness, support political and social progress in Colombia and democracy in the region, and improve our standing on a continent that has long been victimized by totalitarian regimes and anemic growth.... While the presidential campaigns traverse the country and dominate the headlines, our elected officials in Washington must remain focused on the matters at hand - and few are more important than the passage of the U.S.-Colombia agreement. Every day it is not passed is another day of lost opportunities for American companies and workers. By passing the Colombia accord now, America has a rare opportunity to show the world that good trade policy and good foreign policy go hand-in-hand.”

- *Harold McGraw III (chairman of Business Roundtable, chairman of the Emergency Committee for American Trade and chairman, president and CEO of McGraw-Hill Cos), Op-Ed in Washington Times, April 12, 2008*

“... The Colombia free trade pact will help the U.S. every bit as much as it will Colombia -- in some ways, more. The overwhelming majority of Colombia's exports to the U.S. -- 90 percent -- already are free of tariffs, but our exports to Colombia face heavy tariffs of up to 35 percent -- and depending on the product, sometimes much more -- for everything from consumer goods to agriculture. If Congress acts favorably on the agreement, 85 percent of our industrial and consumer exports will be tariff-free, and eventually 100 percent of our exports will be. Now, however, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is threatening not to allow a vote on the issue at all, jeopardizing not just this agreement, but our ability to negotiate future trade agreements, as well.

- *Linda Chavez (chairman of the Center for Equal Opportunity and author of Betrayal: How Union Bosses Shake Down Their Members and Corrupt American Politics), Op-Ed in Town Hall, April 11, 2008*

“... What Colombia needs is the continued economic growth that is overcoming both social ills and the violence. The free trade agreement promises that, just as it promises growth for American workers.”

- *Edward Schumacher-Matos (former New York Times reporter, a visiting professor for Latin American studies at Harvard University), Op-Ed in Boston Globe, April 11, 2008*

“House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s sudden desire to change the rules on trade agreements carelessly throws into doubt a process that has brought unprecedented economic prosperity to millions of Americans — and billions more worldwide.... Failure to deliver on our international promises, especially when the transparent reason is short-term political gain at home, tells the world that we cannot be trusted. That perception would only put Americans at greater risk, economically and strategically.”

- *Terry Miller (director of the Center for International Trade & Economics at The Heritage Foundation), and Daniella Markheim (senior analyst in trade policy at The Heritage Foundation), Op-ed in Fox News, April 11, 2008*

“... The Colombia Free Trade Agreement is an important indicator for the direction our nation is headed. Will we remain at the forefront, breaking down barriers to trade and commerce and fostering growing democracy, prosperity and hope? Or will we retreat into a period of economic isolationism and protectionism? Dallas-Fort Worth is a land of big opportunities. The region's decision to pioneer new trade routes and invest in attracting businesses has paid off with a dynamic, growing economy. Our country needs to keep heading in that direction so we can continue to win and compete in the global economy. For the sake of our nation's security and prosperity, and ensuring stability in a volatile part of the world, we should pass this critical agreement with Colombia.”

- *Carlos M. Gutierrez (U.S. Secretary of Commerce) and Sen. John Cornyn (TX), Op-Ed in The Dallas Morning news, April 11, 2008*

“After eighteen months of bipartisan negotiations, the Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was submitted to Congress this week. In this time of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to enact measures that grow our economy and create jobs for American workers. The Colombia FTA does this and more, and deserves broad support and swift passage in Congress....

I challenge opponents of the Colombia FTA to conduct their own investigation, because I believe that engaging in true fact-gathering — instead of an exchange of partisan talking points — would lead them to enthusiastically support this agreement. The Colombia FTA has been negotiated time and again to accede to political gamesmanship, and it has languished long enough. Let's pass the Colombia FTA.”

- *Rep. Dave Reichert (WA), Op-Ed in Seattle Times, April 10, 2008*

“... In the 21st century, free trade and the open exchange of ideas is a powerful mechanism not only to enhance our economy, but to promote democracy and good will. Congress would be wise to pass the Colombian trade deal and uphold the bond of trust entered into at the start of negotiations with Colombia. In Latin America, and especially Colombia, it can serve as an antidote to Chavez’s aggressive anti-American socialist ambitions.”

- *Rep. Eric Cantor (chief deputy Republican whip), Op-Ed in National Review Online, April 9, 2008*

“The fate of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement rests with Congress. And whether you consider its potential benefits in domestic or international terms, in economic or geopolitical terms, the conclusion is the same: This agreement is a great deal both for the United States and Colombia.”

- *John Negroponte (deputy secretary of state), Op-Ed in San Antonio Express-News, April 8, 2008*

“The U.S. Congress should pass the Colombian trade agreement without further delay. The good news is that Latin American economies and financial markets have proven more resilient to the recent global financial turmoil than many might have expected. I believe we will work through this period

as we have worked through past periods. And we will, as we always do, return to robust growth that benefits the American people and our neighbors in the Americas.”

- *Henry M. Paulson, Jr. (US Treasury Secretary and former Chairman of Goldman Sachs),
Op-Ed in Latin Business Chronicle, April 7, 2008*

“Services such as banking and insurance, technology and express delivery benefit from the Colombia FTA. Observers have correctly pointed out the significant market access that U.S. agricultural and manufactured goods will gain as a result of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Less noticed, but equally if not more important, are the gains to be had by both countries’ service sectors.... In a gloomy U.S. economy, exports have been a rare bright spot; services exports have been an even brighter spot. This deal needs to be approved.”

- *John Goyer (Vice President of International Trade Negotiations & Investment at the Coalition of Service Industries), Op-Ed in Latin Business Chronicle, April 7, 2008*

“... Partisanship should have little or no place in trade policy. What is in the best interest of America is in the best interest of both Republicans and Democrats. In this case, a "no" vote would (1) cast aside a substantial number of export-related jobs at a time when our own economy is shaky; (2) lead to celebrations in Caracas and Quito and severe disappointment in Bogotá, just the opposite of what we would want; and (3) most likely reduce respect for worker rights in South America, not increase it. It is in our own self-interest to approve this agreement, and the sooner, the better. Doing so would represent the decisive, positive leadership the world has come to expect from America.”

- *Ambassador Clayton Yeutter (former U.S. Trade Representative),
Op-Ed in Omaha World Herald, March 26, 2008*

“In the last 20 years, relations between the United States and Latin America have been strengthened by growing economic and commercial ties.... trade agreements are an important tool for fighting poverty and generating opportunities in the Hemisphere.... Latin America and the United States are joined by geography, culture and common values. For many years, the exchange of goods and services across borders has been a vital factor in maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship. The approval of the free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia would be another step forward deepening that relationship, toward fair and equitable integration of our nations, and most importantly, toward securing the stability and peace of the Western Hemisphere.”

- *F. Tomas Duenas (Ambassador of Costa Rica), Favio Dario Espinal (Ambassador of the Dominican Republic), Rene A. Leon (Ambassador of El Salvador), Francisco Villagran (Ambassador of Guatemala), Roberto Flores Bermudez (Ambassador of Honduras), from a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi,
April 29, 2008*

“This treaty will permit the consolidation of a model of development in the region that places representative democracy, economic freedom, free trade, and the unrestricted respect for individual freedoms and human rights above other views that promote development models that have proved to be inefficient in the past.”

- *Alan Garcia Perez (President of Peru), from a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, April 25, 2008*

“The Colombia free trade agreement (FTA) will further enhance Tennessee's competitiveness and level the playing field for Tennessee's exporters. For more than 16 years Congress has given more than 90 percent of Colombian imports duty-free access to the American market, while American exporters to Colombia still pay hundreds of millions in tariffs each year. The FTA would make trade with Colombia a two-way street, benefiting America's businesses, farmers and workers.”

- *Carlos Gutierrez (U.S. Secretary of Commerce) and Senator Bob Corker (TN), Op-ed in The Memphis Commercial Appeal, March 14, 2008*

“The CTPA [Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement] is a free trade agreement, so it is important to begin with some straight talk about trade. Current tariffs between the United States and Colombia are one-sided; 99.9 percent of Colombia's exports already enter the U.S. duty-free. No U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia receive duty-free treatment. The CTPA will level this playing field.... Colombia is already our fifth largest trading partner in Latin America and the largest export market for our agricultural products in South America. Last year, the value of U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia reached a record \$1.2 billion. They included \$500 million of yellow corn, \$210 million of wheat and barley, \$175 million of soybeans and soybean products and \$59 million of cotton. U.S. producers achieved these results despite the tariff and non-tariff barriers that are now in place. With those barriers removed, U.S. producers could compete for a larger share of Colombia's business.”

- *Ed Schafer (U.S. Secretary of Agriculture), Op-ed in The Hill, March 13, 2008*

“Facts are stubborn things, and so it is with trade in general and the North American Free Trade Agreement in particular. Contrary to what some of the candidates are saying, Ohio is benefiting from trade and from NAFTA in extraordinary ways, and no one more than the state's manufacturers.... Many people don't know that the U.S. market is already wide open to imports; our average duty on imports is about 2 percent. But countries such as Colombia and South Korea impose an average tariff on U.S. manufactured goods of 11 percent - just as Mexico did before NAFTA.... The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates the trade agreements with Colombia and South Korea could boost U.S. exports by more than \$25 billion. Saying no to trade deals is the wrong prescription for Ohio manufacturers. And ending NAFTA would be a disaster for the state's manufacturing workers. On trade, politicians campaigning for high office should remember the Hippocratic oath: First, do no harm.”

- *Daniel W. Christman (Senior Vice President for International Affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), Op-ed in Cincinnati Enquirer, March 11, 2008*

“We are asking our allies around the world to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us to fight terrorism, and we must not abandon the people of Colombia, who are doing this very task. There is something that can prove more powerful and lasting than acts of terrorism and war, and that is inclusion in the international arena. It is time for U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to stop delaying a vote on the ratification of the Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement.”

- *Representative Dan Burton (IN), Op-ed in Miami Herald, March 8, 2008*

“There's just been a real transformation in this country. This is a country that has made tremendous strides to provide security for its population... [however], they're clearly very open about all the challenges they face.”

- *Representative Jim Matheson (UT), quoted in The Salt Lake Tribune, March 5, 2008*

“Opposition to this free trade agreement is purely union politics. It's not rational and it's not in the best interest of either country. It makes no sense that we would continue to operate under a system that provides advantages to Colombian businesses exporting products to the U.S. and not provide the same advantages to U.S. companies and their employees who want to sell products in Colombia. I hope Speaker Pelosi will allow the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement to come to the floor of the House and allow members to vote their conscience.... We began Plan Colombia in 1999 under the Clinton administration and have invested around \$5.7 billion in Colombia. President Uribe has made tremendous improvements in security and economic growth and approving this free trade agreement is critically important to Colombia as it continues to chart a successful democratic and economic future.”

- *Senator Bob Corker (TN), quoted in The Chattanooga, March 3, 2008*

“Rarely have the facts been arrayed so compellingly in favor of a trade accord that is squarely in the economic and security interests of the United States as well as our friends in Colombia. Logically and morally, the case for Congress to approve it is overwhelming. For American business, the economic case for the agreement centers on fairness.... In the end, the case for the Colombia trade agreement isn't just economic and geopolitical, it's logical and moral. If the goal is to give opportunities to working Americans on factory floors or Colombians rescuing their nation from drug violence, what possible benefit could there be in defeating this trade agreement? This is why I am confident that Congress will use its head — and its heart — and approve the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement.”

- *Thomas J. Donohue (President and CEP of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), Op-ed in The Politico, March 3, 2008*

“It is time to set the record straight on the benefits of NAFTA by looking at the facts and then pressing Congress to pass pending free-trade agreements. These agreements will increase the state's manufacturing competitiveness around the world and strengthen the security of Ohio's 308,000 manufacturing jobs that depend on exports.... Instead of sitting on the sidelines, let's fight the good game by enacting the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which remains stalled on Capitol Hill after more than two years. A completed agreement will provide Ohio manufacturers nearly unfettered access to one of the world's fastest-growing markets.”

- *John Engler (President of the National Association of Manufacturers and former three-term governor of Michigan), Op-ed in Columbus Dispatch, February 29, 2008*

“Congress' failure to pass the Colombian trade deal may just be the smoking-gun example Mr. Chavez needs to make his case. Our reputation as a global leader is at stake. And the world is watching how Congress responds to this challenge. Given no alternative, I plan on voting later today to extend the current Colombian trade preference program. But we can and should do better by our Colombian allies and by American workers who depend on exports for their livelihoods. Congress must pass the Colombian Trade Promotion Act.”

- *Representative Roy Blunt (MO), Op-ed in Washington Times, February 26, 2008*

“The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is our single most effective tool to help bring economic and political security to Colombia.... Congress must push rhetoric aside and partner with Colombia in their efforts in establishing a secure and vibrant democracy.... A trade deal would extend our current trade relationship from a set of revocable unilateral preferences to a relationship where U.S. industry enjoys the same benefits already granted to Colombia through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug

Eradication Act. With a permanent trade promotion agreement, the Colombian market would open on a reciprocal basis to U.S. goods, allowing 80 percent of U.S. consumer and industrial products to immediately enter Colombia duty-free. This helps workers and allows U.S. exporters to be more competitive at a time of increased challenges. In addition, labor provisions in the core text would require enforcement of domestic labor laws. It is time to level the playing field for ourselves while helping the people of Colombia.”

- *Susan Segal (President and CEO of the Americas Society and the Council of the America), Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, February 25, 2008*

“... [President Alvaro Uribe] is succeeding in breaking the cycle of drift and violence. He is well aware that he needs now to take the economy to a higher level by creating business and spreading employment opportunities amongst Colombians. Preferential trade agreements with the U.S. and EU are central to that strategy. I am... sending you an expression of hope for a positive early decision on the U.S. – Colombia FTA. I am doing this in the spirit of transatlantic partnership and our own overriding shared objective of promoting stability, democracy and growth wherever we can in Latin America.”

- *Peter Mandelson (EU Trade Commissioner), from a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Henry Reid, February 5, 2008*

“Benefits from free trade are real.... As President Bush reminded us in the State of the Union address, Colombia is 'a friend of America that is confronting violence and terror and fighting drug traffickers.' It has more than earned the trade benefits Congress refuses to approve.”

- *Ed Feulner (President of The Heritage Foundation), Op-ed in The Indianapolis Star, February 5, 2008*

“The seeming reluctance of congressional Democrats to consider a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for Colombia, and the hostile reception of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe in Washington last year by Democratic leadership calls into question whether they at all support one of America's staunchest allies in that region. Colombia remains a developing country that for decades has been wracked by civil conflict and an illicit narcotics trade that ends up on American streets. For these reasons, U.S. assistance for Colombia under the Clinton and Bush administrations has exceeded \$5 billion. Many believe a FTA would ensure a sustainable return on our already significant foreign investment in that country.”

- *Senator Judd Gregg (NH), Op-ed in Washington Times, February 2, 2008*

“It is impossible for someone to go to Colombia and not be impressed with the strides they have made in very real ways.”

- *Representative Eliot Engel (NY), quoted in Congress Daily, December 20, 2007*

“...the United States can make a difference in South America, in terms of Venezuelan influence. And here's how: The Congress can pass a free trade agreement with Colombia.... I like to quote Prime Minister Stephen Harper who said, the biggest fear in South America is not the leader in Venezuela, but the biggest fear for stability is if the United States Congress rejects the free trade agreement with Colombia. It would be an insult to a friend. It would send a contradictory message to a country led by a very strong leader, who is working hard to deal with some very difficult problems, one of which is armed gangs of people that are ruthless and brutal -- people who just kidnap innocent people for the sake of achieving political objectives. And so a vote for democracy took place, a very strong vote for democracy. And the United States policy can help promote democracies and stability. And again, I'm going to repeat to you: If the Congress does not pass the free trade agreement with Colombia, it will be a destabilizing moment.”

- *President George W. Bush at a press conference, December 4, 2007*

“The best place to start is with the prompt passage and signing of the Colombian free trade agreement, which has been languishing in Congress for months. Swift U.S. ratification of the pact would send an unequivocal message to the people of Colombia, the opposition in Venezuela and the wider region that they do not stand alone against Chávez. It would also provide concrete economic opportunities to the people of Colombia, helping to offset the restrictions being imposed by Venezuela -- and it would strengthen the U.S. economy in the bargain.”

- *Donald Rumsfeld (former U.S. Secretary of Defense), Op-ed in Washington Post, December 2, 2007*

“By promptly passing the trade agreement, Congress will help cement these reforms and send the unmistakable signal to other Latin American nations that Washington takes seriously economic and democratic liberalization. The economic reasons for passage are as compelling as the national-security arguments that McCaffrey outlined. Colombia is developing into a regional economic power, and it is the second-largest Latin American market for U.S. agriculture exports.”

- *Brigitte Schmidt Gwyn (Director of Business Roundtable), Op-ed in Miami Herald, November 30, 2007*

“Colombia is our fifth largest trading partner in South America and the largest importer of U.S. agricultural products. In 2006, 92 percent of imports from Colombia entered the U.S. duty-free, while tariffs were imposed on virtually all American goods going into their country. A pending trade agreement in Congress would eliminate those tariffs and create a larger market for, among other things, agricultural products and manufactured goods from Mississippi.... In return, the pact will enable Colombia to enhance its ability to compete in the global marketplace.”

- *Former Representative Roger Wicker, Op-ed in The Clarion-Ledger, November 26, 2007*

“Not passing the trade agreement would be a slap in the face quite frankly to the leadership of this country and will also be used by our adversaries in this region to try to taunt the Colombians and say well you have such a great friend in the United States, they wouldn't even stand with you on the trade deal. There is some emotion in this issue. It is important trade wise, it is important for jobs, but there is a certain prestige associated with this agreement being passed at this time that the President here needs and that we need to support our ally.

“I came in support, already supporting the free trade agreement. I intend to go back and try to work with my colleagues and help them understand how important this is for this country and our good ally for this democracy to continue to flourish and provide opportunities to the people that democracies typically do.”

- *Representative Michael Conaway (TX), Interview by Agritalk, November 20, 2007*

“I can assure you that during this administration, President Uribe has made incredible strides not only in the human rights issue but you know in the poverty issues, trying to figure out what you do with, how you absorb, you know, the drugs off the streets and take them off the streets so they don't end up in America so that we can actually start working in a way that we move this economy of this country.... Part of the problem and I see back in Congress is really a political fight between the leadership in the House and the Senate and the administration and I would wish that we can put partisanship aside to move forward”

- *Representative John Salazar (CO), Interview by Agritalk, November 20, 2007*

“The success and stability of Colombia and the Pan-American region depend on our ability to recognize the importance of this agreement to the United States, to Colombia's economy, to human rights progress and to enhanced U.S. national security.... The negotiations are done, and this historic agreement has been passed by the Colombian legislature. Support for Colombia and the trade agreement is smart foreign policy. Congress has a responsibility to act now.”

- *Barry McCaffrey (U.S. drug czar from 1996 to 2001), Op-ed in Washington Post, November 20, 2007*

“I think we’re making progress on both the economic and civil society front with the passage of the FTA, and I do think it would be a pretty serious step backward if we’re not able to do so.”

- *Thomas McLarty (President Clinton’s former Chief of Staff), quoted in Reuters, November 13, 2007*

“So how do we save jobs in this country? By exporting manufactured goods and agricultural products that we can grow and that we can make. This allows us to do better than current law. Now, if you want to vote “no,” what do you get? You get status quo. I thought that's what we were trying to change. We don't like status quo. We want more jobs in America. How do you get more jobs? You get more jobs by allowing people who are engaged in excess production to sell it to somebody else out of this country. That's what it's about. There is one more aspect that I would like to touch on briefly, the national security aspect. South America is going to go one way or the other. I was just in Colombia, South America this last weekend. Chavez and Venezuela is against this. Are you with Chavez or are you with America? That really is basically what I am trying to talk about.”

- *Representative John Tanner (TN), Statement from the House Floor, November 7, 2007*

“It's [U.S. – Colombia TPA] something that the Congress should take up and debate thoroughly and examine thoroughly. But my instinct tells me that if we are already allowing this country's products into our country and we are able to eliminate the tariff on our goods, we ought to take that step.”

- *Representative Bob Goodlatte (VA), quoted in Farm Progress, November 6, 2007*

“It was a great opportunity in a very short period of time to see what great progress Colombia has made in dealing with the drug problem, particularly in Medellin. The fact that they have cut down on the crime rate, particularly murders, and created a more stable environment for economic development to happen is a very positive success story.... What you don’t realize is that it’s a population of 45 million people, or almost 45 million people, where there are very stable, large urban areas, very stable parts of the country that are moving ahead and they’re moving a very stable economy that could be a very good trading partner with the United States.... So I think it’s something we do need to tell people, that Colombia is making great strides and building a great market economy.... Obviously we produce a lot of potatoes and a lot of custom product for a lot of different buyers around the globe, and we’d certainly like to get some of that product into Colombia. I think we would have a tremendous benefit of having a 30 percent tariff that’s currently on our product going into that country basically being removed.”

- *Senator Maria Cantwell (WA), Interview by Stewart Doan, November 5, 2007*

“All of us should hope that Democratic leaders in Congress figure out that not helping Colombia comes at too high a price. The time has come for the Florida congressional delegation to step up and urge the House leadership to approve this important agreement that will not only benefit Florida, the United States, but our neighbors to the south.”

- *By Juan C. Zapata (Republican state representative from Miami), Op-ed in South Florida Sun-Sentinel, November 5, 2007*

“‘We want to see a labor force with the opportunity to be able to organize themselves,’ she said. The Colombian government is making efforts to improve the situation, she said and it doesn't make sense to wait for ‘complete perfection’ before approving the agreement.”

- *Senator Blanche Lincoln (AR), quoted in Dow Jones Newswires, November 4, 2007*

“Colombia is still being studied by the members, and as I told the ambassador who was here this morning ... we would want to work harder in getting votes for Colombia rather than bring the bill up and having it defeated, which we think would be a rebuff to a great president and to great country and a great ally.”

- *Representative Charles Rangel (NY), quoted in Bureau of National Affairs, November 1, 2007*

“Congress has an opportunity to make a lasting impact on economic prosperity and development in Latin America. Support of the free-trade agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Panama and Peru will open new opportunities for countries that have made significant social and economic progress in the last few years.”

- *Brian Wanko (Director of government relations at the Council of the Americas),
Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, October 15, 2007*

“In the last 20 years, many countries in Latin America have made notable advances toward the construction of stable democracies, the promotion of free trade, and improvement of the quality of life of their inhabitants. The United States of America has supported these processes using, among other mechanisms, the signing, ratification, and implementation of free trade agreements.... I believe the implementation of these agreements would be of the greatest benefit [for Peru, Colombia, and Panama], for the United States, and for good relations between your country and Latin America. In addition, the ratification of these agreements would send an important signal of our shared commitment to commercial integration and the development of our continent. Respectfully, I exhort you to do what you can to help achieve this goal.”

— *H.E. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (President of Mexico),
from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 15, 2007*

“This past spring, as part of a delegation to Congress with the Council of American Companies to promote the free trade agreement and Plan Colombia, I was shocked at the lack of interest in Latin American affairs among the people I talked to. This is what is wrong with our foreign policy. We are fickle partners who wait for the mountain to come to us, rather than going to the mountain.”

- *Vincent Volpi (CEO of PICA Corp.), Op-ed in USA Today, October 11, 2007*

“With humility and profound respect, I would like to suggest the importance of the U.S. Congress ratifying these agreements [with Peru, Colombia, and Panama], thinking not only in the benefits they would bring to the Latin American nations I have mentioned — benefits that would be considerable — but also of the benefits they would bring to the people of the United States.”

— *H.E. Oscar Arias (President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize laureate),
from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 10, 2007*

“Congress now has a chance to consolidate the progress and do more to stabilize Colombia by passing a recently-negotiated free trade pact, known as the Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement. This would provide new markets for U.S. exporters as well as jobs and income for hundreds of thousands of Colombians.”

-*Senator Richard Lugar (IN), Op-ed in Miami Herald, October 8, 2007*

“The United States has played an important role in the opening of markets by signing, ratifying, and implementing free trade agreements. Mexico, Chile, and the countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic today benefit from the valuable development tool of a free trade agreement with the

United States. Three additional countries — Colombia, Panama and Peru — also signed free trade agreements with the United States We consider that it would be greatly beneficial for those countries, for the United States, and for good relations between your country and Latin America, that those free trade agreements be ratified.”

— *H.E. Elías Antonio Saca (President of El Salvador), H.E. Manuel Zelaya (President of Honduras), and H.E. Oscar Berger (President of Guatemala), from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 3, 2007*

“In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them a chance at partnership and trade with North America. I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?... If the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve.”

— *Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister of Canada), from a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, September 25, 2007*

“The future of this relationship now lies in the Colombian Free Trade Agreement, and its fate lies in the hands of this Congress. The adoption of a permanent trade agreement between our two nations would allow both countries free and unfettered access to each other’s markets — access American exports do not enjoy today.”

- *Representative Roy Blunt (MO), Op-ed in The Politico, September 25, 2007*

“The foot-dragging in Congress is ironic, because the United States would benefit most from ratification of the U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement—as it was originally negotiated.... It will also strengthen U.S. national security and provide, through economic growth, additional resources for the Colombian government to fight terrorists and cocaine traffickers.”

- *James M. Roberts (a research fellow at The Heritage Foundation), Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, September 24, 2007*

“We should be absolutely clear of the consequences of not passing these agreements. If the United States does not stand with the true democrats of the Americas, who want to better their people’s lives not dominate them, then we will demonstrate exactly what the new autocrats are arguing – that democracy cannot deliver real benefits, that free markets and free trade are a road leading only to empty promises, and that the United States of America will not even stand with its best friends. Put simply: Failing to pass the FTAs with Peru, Panama, and especially Colombia would be a win for Hugo Chavez and a defeat for the forces of democracy in the hemisphere.”

- *John Negroponte (U.S. Deputy Secretary of State), Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, September 24, 2007*

“We are going to find a way to get Colombia passed.... It is very important.”

- *Senator Max Baucus, quoted in The Weekly Standard, July 30, 2007*

“All of us regard Colombia as a crucial ally in a region that deserves our active engagement, and the bill represents an effort to have U.S. funds help address the root of numerous problems there.”

- *Pelosi, Hoyer, Rangel, and Levin, Statement on Trade, July 2, 2007*

“There are important regional economic and political imperatives in favor of the Colombia agreement. It would affirm America’s interest in and commitment to Colombia’s economic development while also increasing market access for U.S. goods. Currently, the United States provides tariff-free access to many Colombian goods under the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Enforcement Act, but we are not afforded similar treatment in Colombia. This deal would change that.”

- *By Tom Daschle (former Democratic Senator from South Dakota),
Op-ed in Washington Post, June 25, 2007*

“Turning away from the Colombia Free Trade Agreement will not end discontent with stubborn poverty, inequality and political marginalization. Rather, it will lock out a valuable tool that can be used to assist in the improvement of rule of law, economic investment and the transition of the poor out of the dead-end informal economy into the more stable formal labor market.”

- *By Representative Gregory W. Meeks (NY), Op-ed in Miami Herald, June 20, 2007*

“I believe that the positive reality generated by the free trade agreement between the United States and Chile might constitute a useful element for the Congress of your country [to consider] when the moment comes to decide on the approval of the Free Trade Agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia. Three years after our bilateral trade agreement came into force, the evaluation of its effects made by my Government, as well as the one of the Chilean public opinion, is clearly positive.... I would also like to emphasize that regarding environmental and labor issues, we are closely working with the authorities of your country in projects oriented to improve the quality as well as to strengthen the enforcement of our laws and regulations, in order to reach international standards.... I am certain that the respective approvals by the Congress of your country of the free trade agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia ... will benefit those countries as well as the rest of the American continent, whose common aspiration is to advance along the path of economic and social development in peace, freedom, and democracy. These approvals will also be beneficial for relations between the United States and Latin America, since they will stimulate trade and exchanges, as well as the global economic and political relations.”

— *H.E. Michelle Bachelet Jeria (President of Chile), from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, April 23, 2007*

Excerpts from Key Editorials:

Pelosi's Trade Priorities (Wall Street Journal)

October 1, 2008

“... The House voted to give duty-free access to the U.S. market for Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia for another year, even as it has refused to hold a vote on a two-way trade deal with Colombia.... Colombia doesn't need preferential, one-way trade that treats that country like a mere low-wage exporter; it needs a permanent two-way trade agreement that will help transform its economy and let it join the ranks of the world's tiger economies.”

Approve Colombia pact (Muskogee Daily Phoenix – OK)

October 1, 2008

“Once Congress deals with the financial crisis, lawmakers should pass the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.... We need to compete better, and right now, most Colombian goods come into the United States duty free because of prior agreements, while American exports face heavy duties in Colombia. Free trade with Colombia would work to our advantage.”

Congress shouldn't stiff-arm a free-trade pact with Colombia (Orlando Sentinel)

September 24, 2008

“...Colombian exporters already have free access to our markets under a temporary trade program. What the new deal would do is provide U.S. exporters with comparable access to Colombian markets. Sounds good for the U.S.”

With exports a bright spot in the economy, Congress should approve 3 agreements (Orlando Sentinel – FL)

September 8, 2008

“...Agreements with Colombia and Panama would give American manufacturers and farmers virtually the same access to those two countries that their exporters already have to the United States under temporary trade-preference programs. The deals should create, not eliminate, U.S. jobs.... An agreement with South Korea, the first U.S. trade pact with a major Asian economy, would help American exporters and investors compete with their European, Chinese and Japanese rivals doing business in that part of the world. It would boost the U.S. economy by at least \$10 billion, according to the International Trade Commission.”

Trade pact with Colombia benefits state, nation (The Daily News - WA)

July 16, 2008

“... This is Economics 101. Trade protectionism invariably costs more jobs than are protected. Most in Congress understand the benefits of expanded international trade, even though many may now find it politically expedient to rail against the North American Free Trade Agreement and pending trade agreements. They also must know that there is no downside to approving the U.S.-Colombian Free Trade Agreement. The United States, in fact, is the net beneficiary in this trade agreement.”

Approve trade deal with Colombia (The State – South Carolina)

July 9, 2008

“... Colombian goods already enter this country duty-free; the pact currently blocked in Congress would open Colombia to U.S. exports. Rep. Jim Clyburn, third ranking Democrat in the House, should prevail upon Speaker Pelosi to let the trade deal go through.”

Time for a Treaty with Colombia (Harrisonburg Daily News Record)

July 9, 2008

“... The daring raid amply demonstrates the Uribe government's bona fides. So do the concessions it has made to win approval of a free-trade treaty with the United States that is, in fact, more beneficial to our nation than to Mr. Uribe's.... Colombia merits our support and assistance. The weekend's events amplified this contention. It's time Democrats ceased their foot-dragging on this treaty.”

Colombia pulled off a spectacular rescue (Corpus Christi Caller Times)

July 8, 2008

“... The spectacularly successful rescue of Ingrid Betancourt and 14 other Colombian hostages, including three Americans, ought to persuade congressional Democrats to pass the long delayed U.S.Colombian trade agreement.”

Hostage rescue a coup for Uribe (South Florida Sun Sentinel)

July 8, 2008

“... Uribe is arguably the United States' best friend in Latin America. He has proven successful in his battle against the FARC, and America should reward his efforts by approving the stagnant free trade treaty with Colombia.”

A daring rescue calls for reward (Boston Herald)

July 5, 2008

“... In short, it was conduct worthy of a loyal U.S. ally - conduct that surely deserves to be rewarded. And the most meaningful reward would be passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement still pending before Congress.”

Rescue the trade deal (Palm Beach Post - Florida)

July 5, 2008

“In an otherwise mostly gloomy week, the rescue of 15 hostages from Colombian rebels was a hopeful story... How about this for a good follow-up story: Congress passes the Colombia Free Trade Agreement?”

Free at Last (The Washington Post)

July 4, 2008

“... The success of this long-term commitment debunks the pessimistic conventional wisdom in Washington about the utility of military assistance to Colombia or other Latin American nations. That is all the more reason for Congress to carry out a liberation of its own. For months, the U.S.-Colombia free-trade agreement and the benefits it would bring to a host of American industries have been held hostage to politics...”

Hail, Colombia (New York Daily News)

July 4, 2008

“... If only Uribe could get a little show of gratitude from our Democratic-led Congress, which continues to block any discussion of a free-trade pact with Colombia - for partisan political reasons.”

No Trade Hypocrite (Investor's Business Daily)

July 3, 2008

“... But Colombia (and Panama) are still left out. In fact, Colombia has been hideously mistreated by the Democratic establishment in Congress, which broke its own 2007 promise to pass a free-trade deal.... Failing to pass a trade deal is a classic case of cutting off our nose to spite our face. The big effect of passing the Colombia pact would be to drop one-way tariffs on American goods, enabling U.S. companies to sell more in new markets.”

And How Do We Thank Colombia? (Investor's Business Daily)

July 3, 2008

“... A foreign country puts its men on the line to rescue American hostages and pulls off one of the greatest rescues in history.... The best way to express our appreciation would be to correct another U.S. blunder by ending Congress' shutout of Colombia's free trade treaty.”

FARC Loses a Booster? (The National Review)

June 13, 2008

“... Uribe’s victory stands as a stark reminder of a shameful moment in the history of the new Democratic majority in Congress. Instead of standing with our strongest South American ally when they had the chance, Democrats in Congress obstructed the passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade agreement when President Bush sent it to Capitol Hill two months ago.... As many who support the deal have pointed out, almost all of Colombia’s products already enter the U.S. duty-free under the Andean Trade Preferences Act. But Congress must renew the ATPA periodically for it to remain in effect. An FTA, by contrast, would provide the long-term guarantee that Colombia needs to secure big investments in its infrastructure.”

Breaking A Logjam? (Investor's Business Daily)

June 10, 2008

“Congress: Is the outlook improving on passing Colombia free trade? Apparently, yes. Monday, its trade minister noted a "good atmosphere" in Congress. If so, Democrats may finally be considering their own interests.... Let's not even bring up that Colombian companies selling in the U.S. already don't pay tariffs at all due to prior agreements — it's another thorn Congress can correct with a vote right away.... We hope Plata is correct — that Democrats are starting to see free trade as a benefit, not a curse, and realize it'll help them win votes. Despite what they think, stalling on free trade buys them nothing.”

Canada Eats Our Trade Lunch (Investor's Business Daily)

June 5, 2008

“Competitiveness: As Congress gloats over its denial of free trade to Colombia, Canada has moved on a free-trade pact of its own that will take U.S. markets. Congressional Democrats often speak of restoring U.S. influence in the world. But if they think halting free trade with Colombia will do the trick, they'll be surprised to know that the country whose influence they are extending is our northern neighbor.... In any other country, such a pointless squandering of market share would be cause for alarm. But somehow, Pelosi & Co. imagine that America doesn't compete in the world, that markets don't matter and that the U.S. will always be number one. They steep themselves in puritanical righteousness, stalling the Colombia pact over a few crimes being prosecuted by authorities, while American influence and competitiveness wither. Colombia isn't going to wait for Pelosi to come to her senses. It'll go ahead and do business with Canada.”

Congress should act on free trade (Cincinnati Enquirer - OH)

June 01, 2008

“... A deal with Colombia makes economic sense for American workers. Nearly all goods from Colombia face no duty at all, while goods from the United States face tariffs ranging from 5 percent to 15 percent. Colombia's new deal with Canada won't help, either.... Candidates are calling for "change" this election

year, yet one of the most meaningful changes to keep the nation competitive and healthy - free trade - seems to be off the table politically. That in itself has to change.”

Trade Vs. Terror (Investor’s Business Daily)

May 28, 2008

“Colombia's economy has surged for five years. In 2007 alone, Colombia's GDP grew 7%..... That has brought millions of poor and displaced young people in shantytowns new jobs and a future. Joblessness has plunged a third since 2002. Before that, the only opportunities in a world without jobs were in groups like FARC or the paramilitaries. Developing new markets and bringing in new investments are critical to keeping the economic momentum going. The most important way for the U.S. to seal a victory over the terrorists is to give Colombia the free-trade agreement it has earned. That will bring more growth, more investment and more jobs....The only way to show we're serious about beating FARC is by expanding economic opportunity. FARC recruits from the poor. But those poor Colombians, given a choice between terror or free trade, choose the latter.”

Democrats' Colombia Disconnect (The Los Angeles Times)

May 28, 2008

“...[T]he trade pact would boost jobs in both the U.S. and Colombia during an economic downturn and cement Colombia as a firm U.S. ally in a region teeming with anti-American sentiment.”

Free-trade deals would be boon for Washington (Longview Daily News – WA)

May 26, 2008

“The United States is the net beneficiary in all three pending trade deals. This is particularly true with regard to the Colombia trade agreement. Colombia already is selling nearly all of its products to the United States duty-free. U.S. products sold to Colombia are subject to tariffs of up to 35 percent for non-agricultural goods and higher for agricultural exports. The trade agreement would eliminate more than 80 percent of those tariffs. Washington state would be among the largest beneficiaries of the Colombia trade pact. Products in Agricultural, aircraft, medical and scientific equipment — all important sectors of this state’s economy — would be sold to Colombia duty-free under the agreement.”

Getting the FARC Out of Colombia (National Review Online)

May 20, 2008

“Almost all of Colombia’s exports already enter the U.S. duty-free. The FTA is nothing more than a formalization of that arrangement; a market-opening opportunity for U.S. businesses; and a show of support for a stalwart ally with whom we share a common threat to peace in the region. As policy, it’s a no-brainer.”

Mr. Uribe's Send-Off (The Washington Post)

May 15, 2008

“...,[P]artners are running out of excuses for their campaign against the U.S. free-trade agreement with Colombia. The murders of "trade unionists" they decried have drastically decreased; the paramilitary leaders they claimed would go free are in U.S. custody. If their agenda is genuinely human rights -- and not opposition to free trade -- it's time for them to change course.”

Political Games Freeze Trade Deal With Good Partner Colombia (The Tampa Tribune)

May 13, 2008

“If members of the U.S. House were allowed to vote on a new trade pact with Colombia, the measure would almost certainly pass....let the Colombian trade pact stand or fall on its merits.”

The Colombia trade deal would boost U.S. economic, foreign-policy interests (Orlando Sentinel)

May 12, 2008

“The agreement would give U.S. factories and farmers the same duty-free access in Colombia that its exporters already have in the United States under temporary trade-preference programs. It would boost U.S. commerce with Colombia by more than \$1 billion a year, including millions annually just in Florida....with the U.S. economy in a slump and U.S. interests under siege in Latin America, all Americans stand to gain from quick approval of the deal.”

Igniting Growth (Investor's Business Daily)

May 7, 2008

“....[L]et's look at what free trade with Colombia would do. It slashes tariffs from 32% to zero on 72% of U.S. goods right off the bat. Better still, it levels the playing field for U.S. firms because Colombian goods already enter the U.S. duty-free.... Meanwhile, if it's not passed, the U.S. economy gets . . . nothing.”

No to free trade retreat (Waco Tribune Herald – TX)

April 29, 2008

“The agreement contains stronger protections for the environment and labor than any other trade agreement in U.S. history. Colombia, America's strongest ally in South America, allowed the trade pact to be renegotiated last year to include stronger environmental and labor standards demanded by Democrats. ‘If the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve,’ observed Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.”

End the drift toward closing door on trade (The Detroit News)

April 29, 2008

“The free trade agreement would also signal U.S. support for a steady ally in a region of South America that is under pressure from the distinctly anti-American regime of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.”

Bring back Colombia pact (Muskogee Daily Phoenix)

April 28, 2008

“We can complain about the U.S. economy and Colombia's trouble with drug cartels all we want, but that doesn't address the fact that in today's global market, free trade is in everyone's best interest.... The United States is a violent place, too, and drug demand here keeps drug cartels in other countries open for business. But put those things aside. Free trade is best. Countries should work at providing good, dependable, competitive products and services, not national trade protection.”

Yes to Colombia pact (The Herald Sun – NC)

April 27, 2008

“President Felipe Calderon of Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada both encouraged the U.S. to approve a free trade agreement with Colombia.”

Right pitch for free trade (Charleston Post Courier – SC)

April 27, 2008

“...[T]he time is ripe...to enact the pending agreement with Colombia. It will allow U.S. goods to enter that country duty free, a status already enjoyed by Colombian goods imported into the United States.”

Free trade agreements help U.S. as much as trading partners (South Florida Sun-Sentinel)

April 26, 2008

“...[F]ree trade treaties often improve America's chances at exporting to other countries, rather than the other way around. That's certainly the case for a proposed trade treaty with Colombia...”

Backward Priorities (Chattanooga Times Free Press)

April 26, 2008

“The South American notion of Colombia...is a friend to America. It is a bulwark against the influence of leftist venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who menaces his neighbors and threatens the United States. If one of these nations deserves a good trade partnership with America, which would it be? Colombia, of course.”

Colombia trade block is a win for Chavez (Press Register – AL)

April 24, 2008

“American workers would benefit from freer trade with Colombia.... In 2006, Alabama's export business increased by 28 percent over the previous year, making this state a national leader in trade growth. Trade deals like the Colombia Free Trade Agreement will help Alabama continue that trend.”

Free Trade For New Orleans (Investor's Business Daily)

April 24, 2008

“...[M]uch of the \$1 billion in new trade to come of the pact's passage in the first year will uniquely benefit New Orleans. Colombia is a particularly valuable trading partner for New Orleans because most of its U.S. imports are corn, soybeans and other products Colombia can't grow, along with major exports including petrochemicalsfor Mayor Nagin, the free trade with Colombia is the economic recovery package. After billions of dollars in federal spending on aid and recovery, free trade has the most potential to secure New Orleans' future.”

Hold Colombia trade vote (Palm Beach Post)

April 23, 2008

“Congress should vote on and approve the agreement this year....give Colombia the support it deserves.”

Don't punt, Pelosi (Savannah Morning News)

April 21, 2008

“...[T]he Colombian Free Trade Agreement would do more than bolster this complementary trade - it could help stem the tide of anti-American sentiment in this hemisphere. Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, a friend of the U.S., has worked diligently to rein in illegal drugs and government corruption. While Congress has given annual approval of Colombia's duty-free status in the past, granting permanent free trade status would help to stabilize that country at the start of Mr. Uribe's second term of office.”

Political poison (Worcester Telegram)

April 20, 2008

“While most Colombian goods come into the U.S. free of tariffs, about 90 percent of American goods are subject to tariffs in Colombia, ranging from 10 percent on manufactures to 35 percent on automobiles. Agricultural products are subject to restrictions that can more than double the cost of basics such as corn, wheat, rice and soybeans. In spite of tariffs, U.S. exports to Colombia last year increased by more than 27 percent to \$8.6 billion. Approval of CFTA would help U.S. farmers and manufacturers do still better with this already solid trading partner.”

Colombia's Case: The intellectual poverty of a free-trade deal's opponents (Washington Post)

April 19, 2008

“There are two important countries at the north of South America. One, Colombia, has a democratic government that, with strong support from the Clinton and Bush administrations, has bravely sought to defeat brutal militias of the left and right and to safeguard human rights. The other, Venezuela, has a repressive government that has undermined media freedoms, forcibly nationalized industries, rallied opposition to the United States and, recent evidence suggests, supported terrorist groups inside Colombia. That U.S. unions, human rights groups and now Democrats would focus their criticism and advocacy on the former, to the benefit of the latter, shows how far they have departed from their own declared principles.”

Treaty good for state's workers (San Bernardino Sun – CA)

April 18, 2008

“Nearly all of Colombia's exports to the United States already are duty-free. This agreement would eliminate or lower the tariffs Colombia imposes on goods from the United States, so it would add jobs here, not subtract them. California exported \$320.8 million in goods to Colombia in 2007, with computers and electronics products making up 45 percent of those exports, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.”

Congressional ineptitude evident in trade dispute (Tri-City Herald- WA)

April 17, 2008

“In Washington state, where one in three jobs depends on international trade, opposing the Colombia agreement is just bad policy.... it's also the wrong thing for software makers, aircraft workers, fishermen and loggers.”

Our Turn: House rule change does major damage (San Antonio Express-News)

April 17, 2008

“Where the United States can't sign trade deals, the European Union and China will.”

Bragging Rights in Colombia Trade Pact Can Boost Dems' Foreign-Policy Profile (The Dallas Morning News)

April 16, 2008

“Doing business with Colombia is, in fact, one of the many ways we can strengthen our economy. Colombia's economy is booming, and the United States supplies 40 percent of its imports. Colombia purchased \$6.7 billion in U.S. exports in 2006 alone.”

Democrats for Colombia (Wall Street Journal)

April 15, 2008

“....35 former senior officials in Democratic Administrations and Democratic Members of Congress signed an open letter urging Congress to pass the Colombia pact. ‘We believe this Agreement is in both our vital national security and economic interests,’ the letter says. ‘We feel that the treaty should be considered as soon as possible and that any obstacles be quickly and amicably resolved.’”

Pandering on trade (The Star Ledger – NJ)

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

“....[F]ailing to move this agreement forward will hardly do much for the U.S. economy or the men and women who make up its work force.... It also would make Colombia eliminate tariffs on American goods and encourage business-friendly reforms that might attract more trade and investment. In other words, it would likely create jobs here rather than eliminate them, not a bad thing when the jobless rate is rising.”

Trade Pact Pulse (Riverside Press Enterprise - CO)

April 15, 2008

“Congress should still have the chance to consider the [Colombia] agreement and, if common sense prevails, approve it.”

Democrats reaction shows deep hostility toward world trade (Portales News Tribune – NM)

April 15, 2008

“The hostility to this agreement makes no sense. Some trade pacts raise a realistic fear that cheaper goods from foreign countries will flood the U.S., destroying or outsourcing the jobs of workers in competing U.S. industries. But U.S. tariffs on imports from Colombia are already close to zero. The effect of this agreement would be to reduce Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods. Increasing exports to Colombia would create jobs rather than destroy them.”

Trade off (Louisville Courier-Journal)

April 15, 2008

“....[T]his Colombian agreement would benefit the U.S.... by eliminating high barriers now confronting our exports to that country, while existing law already lets most Colombian products come into this

country duty-free.... Colombia is a beleaguered ally in a strategically important region, which U.S. influence is eroding.”

Congress should pass Colombia trade deal (Corpus Christi Caller Times – TX)

April 15, 2008

“The trade deal should be approved. As a port city, we understand that efforts to opening up our markets is good for our economy.... This trade agreement would level the playing field and allow Texas companies greater access to a large market of consumers, and maintain good jobs here at home.... Giving Colombia greater access to our markets would offer economic alternatives to illegal drug production, helping it to bring jobs and a better income to its people.”

Bad idea (Columbus Dispatch - OH)

April 15, 2008

The deal favors the U.S. because more than 90 percent of Colombian goods already enter tariff-free while American goods face Colombian tariffs of up to 35 percent. That alone makes the pact worthy of approval, but the accord has the added benefit of enhancing the relationship between the U.S. and Uribe's government, the staunchest U.S. ally in the region and a counterweight to the hostile leftist regime in neighboring Venezuela.

Trade vs. politics (Charlotte Observer)

April 15, 2008

In economic terms, the proposed free-trade pact with Colombia is a no-brainer. If it came to a vote in Congress, it probably would win. Why? Ninety percent of exports from Colombia -- such as grain, cotton and soybeans -- already enter the United States duty free. But U.S. exports to that country -- including pork and poultry -- face tariffs, some of them quite steep.

Free trade shouldn't be sacrificed to politics (Tacoma News Tribune)

April 14, 2008

“...[E]conomic growth and free trade are not mutually exclusive. One of the surest ways to achieve the former is to expand the latter. That's especially true with the Colombian deal. Its chief effect would be to lower Colombian tariffs on American exports, including Washington crops, electronics and machinery... the agreement [deserves] approval on its merits, regardless of politics. It [serves] American interests.”

House Democrats Holding Free Trade Hostage (News Sentinel - Knoxville, TN)

April 14, 2008

“...[I]t's worth noting that this treaty would benefit [the United States] more than the Colombians. Under an annual agreement, their goods enter the U.S. tariff-free. Under this agreement, our goods, now taxed as high as 35 percent, would enter Colombia the same.”

Stalling Free Trade Won't Work (Investor's Business Daily)

April 14, 2008

“Every major editorial page in America has endorsed the Colombia free-trade pact.”

A Trade Pact Good for Colombia and for the U.S. (International Herald Tribune)

April 14, 2008

“The deal also would strengthen the institutional bonds tying the United States to Colombia, one of America's few allies in an important region that has become increasingly hostile to American interests. Perhaps most important, the deal would provide a tool for Colombia's development, drawing investment and helping the nation extricate itself from the mire of poverty that provides sustenance to drug trafficking and a bloody insurgency.”

A Setback on Trade in Washington (Financial Times)

April 14, 2008

“Colombia is a US ally in a region where friends are few and far between.... One of the best remedies for what ails Colombia is the prospect of faster economic growth that the blocked trade deal would [help] to underwrite.”

Free Trade Pact Should Be OK'd (DNR – Harrisburg, VA)

April 14, 2008

“There are many reasons this pact should [be] approved now, not the least of which is that Colombia, which shares a border with decidedly anti-American Venezuela, is our foremost ally in this unsettled region.”

Trade Pact Victim of Politics (Daily Breeze - Torrance, CA)

April 14, 2008

“Colombia is our only ally in the area. The nation's human-rights record is steadily improving, even as it fights drug trade, corruption and terror organizations - egged on by its hostile neighbors.... Moreover, Colombia exports to the United States already are duty-free, so this agreement would only make trade fairer. The agreement is also virtually identical to one Congress recently approved with Peru.”

House should Vote on Colombia Trade Deal (Austin American Statesman - TX)

April 14, 2008

“Let the House vote on the Colombian agreement. If House Democrats really believe it's a bad bill, they can vote against it. We suspect, though, they know it's a good deal for both the United States and Colombia.”

Politics Trumps Free Trade (The Post and Courier - Charleston, SC)

April 14, 2008

“The free trade agreement promises the Colombian people a dividend by increasing trade with the United States and encouraging U.S. investment. It would have capped the success that President Uribe has achieved in battling the FARC, which has earned him a popularity rating of 82 percent. The agreement would also benefit the United States, but to a greater degree, because it would remove barriers to our exports. ... [T]he trade agreement is so beneficial to both the United States and Colombia that ... reason may return after the November elections.”

Trading on Ignorance (The Orange County Register - Santa Ana, CA)

April 13, 2008

“The hostility to [the Colombia trade pact] makes no sense. Some trade pacts raise a realistic fear that cheaper goods from foreign countries will flood the U.S., destroying or outsourcing the jobs of workers in competing U.S. industries. But U.S. tariffs on imports from Colombia are already close to zero. The effect of this agreement would be to reduce Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods. Increasing exports to Colombia would create jobs rather than destroy them. ... Since trade has proved to be the most effective way of lifting peoples and countries out of poverty, opposing more trade implies hostility to effective action to help people living in grinding poverty. Sad indeed.”

Historical failure on Colombia trade pact (The Denver Post)

April 13, 2008

“...[T]he shelving of the [U.S.-Colombia trade] agreement is particularly perplexing. Colombia is our only ally in the area. The nation's human-rights record is steadily improving, even as it fights drug trade, corruption and terror organizations - egged on by its hostile neighbors. Moreover, Colombia exports to the United States already are dutyfree, so this agreement would only make trade fairer. The agreement is also virtually identical to one Congress recently approved with Peru.”

Sidetracking Colombia Trade Deal Hurts U.S. Businesses and Workers (The Plain Dealer - Cleveland, OH)

April 13, 2008

“...[T]he case against the Colombia pact is weak. Set aside the needless insult to a South American ally that has struggled with civil unrest and violence. Instead, focus on the money: Because of existing agreements, Colombian products entering the United States are subject to few, if any, tariffs. By contrast, American goods headed south are hit with duties of up to 80 percent. Cementing that status quo would hurt American businesses and American workers.”

Caving on Colombia (Chicago Tribune)

April 12, 2008

“This trade pact would help the U.S. sell more goods to Colombia and create more jobs in the U.S. Colombia is a strategic U.S. ally and trading partner in a part of the world where the U.S. needs friends.”

Lose-Lose: House Rejection of Trade Agreement is Bad for U.S. Workers and Colombia (Houston Chronicle)

April 12, 2008

“The [U.S.-Colombia trade] agreement, in short, is indisputably to the advantage of U.S. companies and their employees.”

Pelosi Plays Politics (Los Angeles Times)

April 12, 2008

“[The [Colombia Free Trade Agreement] creates balance in a policy that is lopsided.... Reducing tariffs in both countries is good for Colombia, but it's even better for the U.S.... Another argument is that Colombia remains a dangerous place for union organizers, and it should not be rewarded until it can ensure their safety. This is a valid concern, but Colombia has made real progress: It has instituted special

protections for union organizers, created an office in its department of justice to reduce the backlog of murder cases and stepped up the pace of criminal convictions. ... [Nancy Pelosi] should schedule a vote on the agreement, and Congress should approve it.”

Derailing Colombian Trade Pact was Political Pandering at its Worst (The News Journal - Wilmington, DE)

April 12, 2008

“The trade agreement actually would have changed little from the current set up as far as Colombia's trade with us. However, the pact would have eliminated tariffs of 35 percent on U.S. made goods. By formalizing our arrangement with Colombia, we would have given that country greater incentives to push toward more democratic reforms.”

Democratic Demagogues (Omaha World Herald - NE)

April 12, 2008

“Above all, for anyone to imagine that the Colombia agreement would mean the loss of U.S. jobs is nothing short of absurd, given this economic reality: All of Colombia’s exports already are coming into this country duty-free. The agreement would have ended Colombia’s tariffs on our exports. Such a change would mean benefits for, among others, agricultural producers in this section of the country. The agreement would have immediately removed the tariff barriers on more than 70 percent of U.S. ag exports to Colombia.”

The Washington Six: Tampering with Trade; The Newspaper's View (The Seattle Times)

April 12, 2008

“The trade agreement must not be permitted to be the victim of election-year brinkmanship. The democracy of Colombia, warts and all, is the best friend the United States has in South America.”

Pelosi's War (Investor’s Business Daily)

April 11, 2008

“Unlike, say, military aid, [the U.S.-Colombia trade] deal costs the U.S. nothing, is too small to have much impact on the U.S. economy and is mainly about ending tariffs on U.S. goods sold in Colombia, matching the no-tariff trade that Colombian firms already get here. Free trade was what Chavez's enemy, Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, considered his best weapon.”

Colombian Trade (Winston Salem Journal)

April 11, 2008

“Under current international agreements, most goods moving from Colombia to the United States do so without import duties. The pact would provide the United States with a reciprocal duty-free deal on most goods it sends to Colombia.... this pact is a ‘nobrainer’ for Americans: Of course we should approve it.”

Stalling on FTA Hurts Valued U.S. Ally; Colombia Trade Pact Benefits Both Countries (The Miami Herald)

April 11, 2008

“The economic argument against the FTA is equally weak. Colombia already enjoys duty-free exports to the United States. This provides reciprocity. Furthermore, the United States enjoys a trade surplus with every country with which it has a special trade agreement. The claim that the Colombia FTA will destroy U.S. jobs rings hollow.”

In a fog Over Trade (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel - WI)

April 11, 2008

“The United States must live in the real world - the real globalized world. ... The [U.S.- Colombia] free trade agreement would level the playing field for American businesses and their workers. ... More exports equal more jobs. ... Colombia has earned our trust.”

Time for the Colombian Trade Pact (The New York Times)

April 11, 2008

“[The U.S.-Colombia trade] deal would benefit the American economy and further the nation’s broader interests in Latin America. It is time for Congress to ratify it.”

Pelosi's Ploy; Colombia Deal Succumbs to Politics (The Oklahoman)

April 11, 2008

“... [J]obs, opening foreign markets to U.S. goods, improved image and better hemispheric relations. Check, check, check and check. On all four, the Colombia free trade agreement (FTA) is a no-brainer.”

Trade Pandering (San Francisco Chronicle)

April 11, 2008

“The [U.S.-Colombia trade] treaty - and the warmer relations it brings – has overwhelming advantages. Approval would show that Washington believes in supporting an ally ready to stand up to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Closer trade ties could cement gains made by Colombia's fragile democratic government. In an uncertain economic atmosphere, lower tariffs could lay the groundwork for a healthy recovery.”

Yes to Free Trade (The Baltimore Sun)

April 10, 2008

“If the United States fails to lower trade barriers with Colombia, South Korea and other countries with deals now pending, the European Union, China and others will. Trade barriers are a futile exercise in a global market that continues to push work to the lowestwage countries.”

The Pelosi Doctrine: Duck (Boston Herald)

April 10, 2008

“[Nancy] Pelosi surely knows that passing the bill is the right thing to do, and benefits American farmers and manufacturers by lifting Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods (tariffs on Colombian goods entering the U.S. are already virtually non-existent).”

Free Choice (National Review)

April 10, 2008

“The substantial case for passing [the U.S.-Colombia trade] deal is rock solid. It imposes no costs on the U.S. economy. It would strengthen diplomatic ties to a key ally in a vital region. It includes enforceable protections for workers and the environment. It is practically identical to an agreement with Peru that Congress just passed.”

Trade Sanity? (The Press Enterprise - Riverside, CA)

April 10, 2008

“Everything about [the U.S.-Colombia trade] agreement argues for its passage.”

Politics and Trade (St. Louis Post Dispatch)

April 10, 2008

“If reason prevailed, the Colombia free trade agreement would breeze through Congress.”

Pelosi's Bad Faith (Wall Street Journal)

April 10, 2008

“[Nancy Pelosi's] objections (to the Colombia free trade agreement) will damage the economic and security interests of the U.S. while trashing our best ally in Latin America.”

Drop Dead, Colombia (The Washington Post)

April 10, 2008

“Economically, [supporting the Colombia Trade Agreement] should be a no-brainer -- especially at a time of rising U.S. joblessness. At the moment, Colombian exports to the United States already enjoy preferences. The trade agreement would make those permanent, but it would also give U.S. firms free access to Colombia for the first time, thus creating U.S. jobs. Politically, too, the agreement is in the American interest, as a reward to a friendly, democratic government that has made tremendous strides on human rights, despite harassment from Venezuela's Hugo Chávez.”

Yes to Free Trade (The Washington Times)

April 10, 2008

“The [Colombia Free Trade Agreement] deserves to be approved.... Under the brave, competent leadership of President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia deserves to become a free trade partner of the United States.”

The Real Issue on Free Trade (The Christian Science Monitor)

April 9, 2008

“America's ability to compete globally has made it the world's largest exporter and one of the wealthiest nations per capita. ... If both parties would compromise, they could then live up to their free-trade traditions and help workers cope with a globalized world as it is and not try to turn back the tide of trade.”

Colombia Trade Deal (Las Vegas Review Journal)

April 9, 2008

“Free trade makes nations prosperous; trade restrictions allow the creation of artificial monopolies which drive up consumer prices. ... Cutting a tariff-reducing deal with a South American nation such as Colombia makes particularly good sense.”

A Trade Deal That All of the Americas Need (Rocky Mountain News - Denver, CO)

April 9, 2008

“It is vital to U.S. interests that Congress approves the [U.S.-Colombia trade] treaty.”

Bashing Has a Price | Demagoguery Imperils Colombia Trade Pact (San Diego Union Tribune)

April 9, 2008

“On both national security and economics grounds, the U.S.-Colombia trade pact should be a slam dunk.”

Our View on Free Trade: Pass the Colombia Pact; Democrats pander to Big Labor, Flirt with Return to Protectionism. (USA Today)

April 9, 2008

“Nor is there a good reason why Obama, Clinton and other leading Democrats should oppose a proposed free trade agreement with Colombia, set for a vote this year.... Colombia would get nothing from it other than the permanent extension of the status quo.... Most U.S. exporters to Colombia would see their tariffs, now ranging from 7% to 80%, slashed to zero. ... The government of Colombia is a solid ally and a counterweight to Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez. It has accepted decades of American arguments that free markets and trade are the best engines of growth and antidotes to extremism.”

Colombia and Cat (The Wall Street Journal)

April 9, 2008

“The FTA is a chance to open Colombian markets to U.S. goods and services. Killing it is like saying that we want U.S. products going to Colombia to be heavily taxed. ... For American workers, it's crazy.”

Fast-Track to Pelosi (The Hill)

April 8, 2008

“... Colombia is a loyal U.S. ally in a part of the world where Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's anti-U.S. rhetoric resonates. Chavez would declare victory if the trade deal is defeated.”

Pass The Pact (Investor's Business Daily)

April 8, 2008

“President Bush's risky decision to force a vote on the Colombia free trade agreement in Congress wasn't undertaken lightly and underscores that this [U.S.-Colombia trade] pact is about far more than politics. ... No major trade pact has ever failed in Congress. Yet no ally to our south has ever been so valuable to the U.S. as Colombia. [Bush] ... is asking Congress whether ... they really want Colombia to be as rich and democratic as the U.S. — or an isolated pariah state shut out of investment and a regional laughingstock at the mercy of our enemies.”

Approve Pact with Colombia (Los Angeles Times)

April 8, 2008

“Now the U.S. must demonstrate faith in an ally -- faith that [Colombia’s] reforms are not solely the product of political pressure from the north, and that the people of Colombia and the government are equally committed to a more just society. Congress should approve the trade pact.”

A Great Deal Our Position: Congress Should Waste No Time in Approving Colombian Trade Pact (Orlando Sentinel)

April 8, 2008

“Congress needs to approve the [U.S.-Colombia trade] deal soon -- before time runs out.”

Free Trade The Truth About Jobs (The Philadelphia Inquirer)

April 8, 2008

“The proposed pact with Colombia ... would remove tariffs as high as 35 percent on U.S. goods, further opening up that market to American companies selling tractors, fabricated metal products and agricultural goods. Exports to Colombia could increase by more than \$1 billion if Congress approves the agreement. Increasing U.S. exports means more jobs for American workers. Furthermore, a trade agreement would help bolster Colombia's fight against narcotics-dealing insurgents backed by Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez.”

Free Colombia; A trade Pact Everyone Can Love (The Washington Post)

March 31, 2008

“As we have said, the proposed [Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement] is good policy for both Colombia and the United States. ... A vote for the Colombia deal would show Latin America that a staunch U.S. ally will be rewarded for improving its human rights record and resisting the anti-American populism of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.”

Free Trade’s Pros Far Outweigh the Cons (The Indianapolis Star)

March 31, 2008

“It's tempting to believe the current political rhetoric that rewriting existing free-trade agreements and taking a hard line on future deals would somehow fix the nation's (and Indiana's) economic problems. But the bulk of evidence indicates that free trade is more of a benefit than a curse for American workers, creating jobs, growing wealth and holding down inflation.”

Move Forward with Colombia Free Trade (San Antonio Express News)

March 27, 2008

“Colombia has made impressive political, judicial and economic strides in recent years. And it has done so under difficult circumstances, battling narco-terrorists in a region that has become increasingly inhospitable to democratic reform. Passage of a free trade agreement with Colombia would benefit the United States while also sending a strong message about the American commitment to such reform....that's the right message to send.”

Bush was on Right Track in Pushing all the Benefits of More International Trade (Orlando Sentinel)

March 20, 2008

“...[E]xports accounted for more than 40 percent of U.S. economic growth last year, and are up this year. They're one of the few winners when the dollar falls, and a rare bright spot in the current economy.... the trade deal would give U.S. exports the same access to Colombia.... Congress needs to stop stalling and pass it.”

Bush Raises Stakes On Free Trade (Investor's Business Daily)

March 12, 2008

“There's no good reason not to pass the Colombia pact. Colombia is our best ally in the hemisphere and, coming up from a long war, has a sharply improving democracy and human rights record. ‘No nation has ever improved as this one has,’ drug czar John Walters said in a recent interview with IBD.... Meanwhile, exports can help in America's effort to stave off recession. U.S. exports grew 12.6% in 2007, and exports to free-trade countries grew faster still. ‘Last year, exports accounted for 40% of U.S. growth,’ Bush noted. ‘Doesn't it make sense to open up markets, to continue to grow our good economy with exports?’”

To a freer Latin America (Arizona Republic)

March 12, 2008

“Most Colombian exports to this country arrive largely duty-free, courtesy of the 1991 Andean Trade Preference Act, which reduced or eliminated trade barriers to Latin American countries that took effective steps to fight drug-trafficking. A former narco-terror hell on Earth, Colombia has taken greater steps to fight the narcotics cartels than, arguably, any nation in the region.... In 2006, for example, Arizona companies exported a relatively paltry \$9.8 million worth of manufactured goods and electronics to Colombia, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. And they paid a healthy fee for that privilege, including tariffs of 10 to 20 percent. Congressional approval of the Colombian free-trade agreement would strike that imbalance and almost certainly would prove an immediate godsend to Arizona manufacturers that do business with Bogotá.”

Pass the Colombian Trade Treaty (Rocky Mountain News)

March 11, 2008

“Recent events in South America suggest that it is in the United States' interest, and certainly in Colombia's interest, to pass the agreement, and soon.... Passing the free-trade agreement would shore up a friendly government and help Colombia's economy and ours, too.”

Colombia Has Earned Its Trade Pact (Investor's Business Daily)

March 11, 2008

“With time for passage running out with the expiration of President Bush's fast-track authority in June, the pact likely is to come up for a vote soon, with or without the approval of congressional leaders. If congressional Democrats don't approve it, they'll be the most ungrateful partners any friend of the U.S. has encountered. Such ingratitude will reverberate in other countries and limit American influence. Colombia is an ally that deserves free-trade status and has done more than its share to earn it.”

The Chávez Democrats (Wall Street Journal)

March 10, 2008

“Meanwhile, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe is embracing greater economic and political freedom. He has bravely assisted the U.S fight against narco-traffickers, and he now wants to link his country more closely to America with a free-trade accord. As a strategic matter, to reject Colombia's offer now would tell everyone in Latin America that it is far more dangerous to trust America than it is to trash it.”

Pass Colombia trade deal (Palm Beach Post – FL)

March 10, 2008

“In an increasingly anti-American region, allies need economic help from America. The Colombian free trade agreement would provide it.”

Colombia Gives Free Trade A Chance (Investor's Business Daily)

March 05, 2008

“So here is Colombia, a nation provoked to war by two barbaric neighbors spoiling for a fight, and the only thing it wants from its big ally up north is the passage of a trade pact to drop tariffs on U.S. goods and encourage investment in both countries.... Colombia's refusal to get into a fight with Chavez signals a strong preference for peace through trade and development. If Congress won't approve Colombia's free trade pact after such a demonstration of courage under fire, then it's no better than Chavez.”

Uribe! (National Review Online)

March 5, 2008

“The trade deal with Colombia would cost the U.S. almost nothing — most Colombian goods already enter the U.S. duty-free — but would open Colombia’s markets to American exporters, strengthening our economic and security ties to a country that shares our interest in countering terrorism and authoritarianism in South America.... Congress should pass the Colombia FTA as soon as possible to show President Uribe that we support Colombia’s fight against terrorists and the regimes that enable them.”

Obama's Teamster 'Diplomacy' (Wall Street Journal)

February 21, 2008

“Consider also that Seoul is willing to open up some of its own politically sensitive industries, such as banking and cars, for the FTA. Mr. Obama might take a look at a report last fall from the International Trade Commission, which says the FTA is expected to boost U.S. GDP by \$10 billion to \$12 billion annually and that the impact on American employment would be ‘negligible.’ In exchange, consumers in both countries would enjoy lower prices and a wider range of goods. Korean President Roh Moo-hyun has put a lot of political capital behind the trade pact and President-elect Lee Myung-bak is also a strong supporter.... A U.S. ‘no’ would be a huge embarrassment for them -- and for American ‘diplomacy.’”

It's Critical for Sen. Nelson to Support Trade Agreement With Colombia (Orlando Sentinel)

February 14, 2008

“The trade deal with Colombia also would serve the broader national interest. It would put U.S. businesses and their workers, and U.S. farmers, on an equal footing with their Colombian counterparts, who have been given duty-free access to the U.S. market for years. It would strengthen ties with

Colombia and enhance U.S. influence in Latin America at a time when it is being aggressively challenged by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.”

Needed by our South American Ally. But it Needs to Do its Part. (Los Angeles Times)

February 1, 2008

“Colombia, one of our staunchest allies in South America, needs us to fulfill our commitment to the Andean region's economic development. President Bush has called on Congress to ratify the free trade agreement with Colombia negotiated by his administration, and we too want to see a pact approved.”

Whose Failure On Colombia's Pact? (Investor's Business Daily)

January 31, 2008

“Following a free-trade delegation led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Medellin, Colombia, last week, it's astonishing how well some congressional Democrats grasp why a pending free trade agreement with Colombia ought to pass.... Here are the facts: Colombia is a strong hemispheric ally. Most of its goods to this country already come in duty-free. As such, free trade would benefit U.S. companies and workers as much if not more than Colombians. There's no downside.”

Bush's End Game (Wall Street Journal)

January 29, 2008

“We were also glad to see Mr. Bush stress free trade last night, especially the U.S. pacts with Colombia and South Korea now pending in Congress. Free trade is a hard sell even in the best of times, but it is an issue on which a President must spend capital in the national interest. Colombia is a key ally in a bad neighborhood not far from U.S. shores. For Congress to reject Colombia's attempt to link itself to the U.S. economy would be a strategic blunder of the first order.”

Free Trade: Worth Fighting For (Investor's Business Daily)

January 10, 2008

“Recession's winds are blowing and America's strategic position is uncertain. Passing the approved pacts for Colombia, Panama and South Korea will bring great economic opportunity to the U.S. and provide a stable climate for growth for the allies who've stood by us.... If Democrats are serious about winning the White House in 2008, they need to think about the kind of America their leader is going to face in 2009 — one of recession, broken alliances and alienated allies, or a new era of investment and opportunity that will ensure a path to fast growth. Democrats must join President Bush as he makes his plea, and pass free trade now. We sink or swim together.”

Peru Down, Colombia to Go (Wall Street Journal)

December 27, 2007

“By now, most unbiased observers have noted the remarkable job Colombian President Álvaro Uribe has done to return peace and security to that country since taking office in 2002. And we're confident Mr. Rangel wants to do the right thing, but he keeps getting whipsawed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the AFL-CIO.... Do Democrats really want to lose Colombia?”

Peru trade deal done; two more need action (San Antonio Express-News)

December 13, 2007

“Beyond the impact on the two countries, the U.S.-Peru agreement's expansion of Western Hemispheric free trade offers a compelling free market alternative to paternalistic and socialistic efforts to fight poverty.... On this note, Congress can follow through by finally passing two other long-delayed free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama. Prosperity is a powerful antidote against authoritarian rulers pushing failed economic policies. Free markets empower free people and free societies. The least the United States can do for friendly democracies in Latin America is bolster them with free trade agreements that, at the same time, also bolster our own economy.”

Colombia Pact Rising (Investor's Business Daily)

December 12, 2007

“The U.S.-Peru free trade pact, to be signed Friday, will not just bring our ally closer and assure its prosperity. It also seems to be generating momentum for the more critical trade deal with Colombia. That's important, because extending free trade with Peru while denying it to Colombia sends a bad message to our 34 southern neighbors that the U.S. isn't all that committed to the region — or reliable as a partner.... The two pacts are about equal, were negotiated at the same time and required the same reforms. Both nations willingly made the changes because they wanted free trade so badly. To give one free trade while leaving the other in the cold will not only alienate both, but will send a message to the region that the U.S. is a mercurial partner unworthy of alignment.”

Slapping Our Latin Allies (New York Post)

December 10, 2007

“Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has been America's closest friend in South America ever since he inherited his fractured, violence-plagued country five years ago. And he's worked nothing short of a miracle, imposing law and order in regions once overrun with Chavez-backed Communist rebels, powerful drug cartels and paramilitary gangs. Democrats in Congress, however, are holding up a free-trade bill that would help Columbia [sic] get on its feet.”

Peru Is In, Now Where's Colombia? (Investor's Business Daily)

December 04, 2007

“In short, it's Christmas all around, with the free trade zone of the Americas stretching ever farther across the hemisphere's Pacific coast. It is a trade alliance that will bring confidence and prosperity as surely as it will provide an alternative to populist tyranny. That is why the pending trade pact with Colombia is just as critical.... With Peru showing that free trade is alive and passable, there is plenty of cause for celebration. Now is the time to move forward on a deal with Colombia. The momentum must not be lost. There is too much to gain.”

A way to boost economy (Orlando Sentinel – FL)

November 15, 2007

“The U.S. House's recent approval of a free-trade pact with Peru was, as Democratic Rep. Kendrick Meek of Miami declared, ‘a great victory for Florida's economy.’... Trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea -- three more key trade partners for Florida -- await action from Congress. Passing those deals would stretch the recent victory from the Peru pact into a winning streak for Florida's economy.”

Congress finally gets on free trade track (San Antonio Express News - TX)

November 14, 2007

“It's a good sign that Congress has gotten back on the free trade track with the White House. Now it has to follow through with the other three free trade agreements that will benefit the United States as well as its trading partners.”

Deal With Colombia (Washington Post)

November 9, 2007

“Ratification of the trade promotion agreement would help consolidate Colombia's progress by bringing jobs and income to its people. To make them wait indefinitely while Colombian authorities go through cold-case files would be to substitute some Americans' priorities for those of the Colombian voters who reelected Mr. Uribe last year with over 60 percent of the vote. The United States should not write Mr. Uribe a blank check, but the appropriate means of pressuring him already exist in human rights conditions Congress has attached to Colombia's military aid packages. It's time for Democrats to drop their strained human rights objections to the Colombia trade promotion agreement and deal with it on its merits.”

Trading Up (National Review Online)

November 9, 2007

“But the agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Panama are not about letting U.S. companies outsource jobs.... The new trade agreements simply open the Peruvian, Colombian, and Panamanian markets to American-made goods. It is a question of reciprocity.”

Rejecting trade treaty with Colombia won't bolster its stability (South Florida Sun-Sentinel)

October 29, 2007

“For Congress to now say that it is disgusted by the violence, particularly against one sector of the Colombian population, and to use that argument to undermine a free trade treaty, is a travesty. The free trade treaty ought to be considered on its merits. If it makes sense for the United States, then it should be approved.... Florida has much to gain from this treaty, in terms of financial services and trade through our ports. Our congressional leaders ought to be championing the treaty, not dissing it. Unfortunately, there's a confused mix of economics and human rights advocacy. Shooting down a trade treaty with Colombia isn't the way to bolster stability and hasten an end to paramilitary attacks on civilians.”

Colombia Trade Agreement (New York Times)

October 15, 2007

“We need both free trade and continued transparency and justice to secure a brighter future for Colombia.”

Free-trade pacts worth fighting for (Miami Herald)

October 12, 2007

“Anything that strengthens the bonds between the United States and Latin America is anathema to the enemies of democracy. This is why it is imperative for Congress to approve three pending free-trade agreements with Peru, Panama and Colombia. Failure would strengthen the hand of anti-American forces in the region and undermine efforts by the leaders of those three countries to bolster democratic institutions.... Negotiators have made a sincere effort to deal with the most pressing concerns of critics by

improving provisions dealing with the environment and workers' rights. President Bush should keep pressing the case until he carries the day.”

Lift Barriers (Orlando Sentinel – FL)

September 10, 2007

“In fact, the deals with Peru, Panama and Colombia would give U.S. companies the same market access to those countries that their exporters already enjoy in the United States. The agreement with South Korea would open the world's 11th-largest economy to U.S. companies. Notably, it would lower barriers to U.S. auto exports.”

Counter Chavez's Mischief (Orlando Sentinel - FL)

August 26, 2007

“What is important now for the U.S. is to establish a strong network of friends in the region to counter Mr. Chavez's growing influence.... That's another reason why the U.S. should secure pending free-trade deals with Panama, Peru and Colombia.... Strengthening ties between the U.S. and these three countries will boost their economies and provide a strong ideological influence to counter the power play in Venezuela.”

Pandering on trade policy bad for business, workers (Denver Post)

August 20, 2007

“The trade pacts now pending before Congress are designed to knock down existing barriers to U.S. exports. Congress should approve these job-creating trade pacts when it returns from its August vacation.”

Approve trade deals around the Pacific (Seattle Times)

August 15, 2007

“Washington's delegation in Congress should support the trade agreements that have been signed with Peru, Colombia, Panama and South Korea.”

Politics As Local Or Plumb 'Loco' (Washington Times)

August 14, 2007

“By refusing to consider the U.S.-Colombian free trade agreement, Democratic leaders in Congress pervert local U.S. politics and are acting loco, as they put America's best friend in Latin America in grave danger, thereby seriously threatening the stability of Latin America, accurately described as the United States' backyard, geographically and strategically.”

Stabilizing Colombia (The Washington Times)

August 13, 2007

“While Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has proven himself a vigorous advocate for narcotic eradication who has made overseen major improvements to the economic and political stability of his nation (particularly when compared to predecessors), there is undoubtedly much room for improvement. Congress must continue its trajectory for improving Plan Colombia and approve the Colombia free trade agreement.”

Congress ignores a friend in need (Miami Herald)

July 24, 2007

“Helping Colombia is in our national interest. It's about helping our strongest friend in the region, not about catering to a domestic interest group. Unless Congress wants to send a signal that the United States either doesn't care or doesn't know who its friends are -- there are fewer every day -- lawmakers should extend Mr. Uribe a helping hand instead of giving him the back of the hand.”

Trade Double-Cross (Wall Street Journal)

July 5, 2007

“Democrats are promising to improve America's image in the world if they retake the White House next year. Tell that to Peru and Colombia, which are watching Democrats in Congress renege on free-trade assurances that are barely a month old.... Never in our memory has a U.S. trade partner been forced to change its laws before Congress ratifies the deal. As a sovereign nation, Peru has negotiated in good faith, even agreeing to keep open the deal's labor and environmental planks to accommodate Democrats after they won Congress. And for its trouble, Peru now gets to watch American Congressmen play gringo nannies to its domestic political process.... Rejecting the Peru and Colombia deals would be a strategic disaster, playing into the hands of Hugo Chávez and others who want to turn Latin America against the U.S. And while America sits on the trade sidelines, the rest of the world will keep cutting its own bilateral and regional deals that leave U.S. workers and businesses at a disadvantage.”

Trading with Colombia (Chicago Tribune)

June 23, 2007

“Uribe’s government has made major strides, persuading tens of thousands of combatants to lay down their arms. Murders and kidnappings, the tools of choice during the decades of lawlessness, have dropped dramatically. The result is a more stable country with a booming economy and a strong diplomatic relationship with the U.S. Moreover, Uribe stands for democracy and free markets on a continent that has veered sharply left toward state control.”

The struggle for Colombia (San Francisco Chronicle)

June 13, 2007

“There exists a country that has managed, with American aid, to stabilize its government, disarm most of its militias, drastically slash crime and foster economic growth. It’s Colombia, and despite well-founded concerns about this country’s continuing troubles, it deserves our support.”

Promote free trade (Orlando Sentinel)

May 14, 2007

“Our position: Florida's economy wins big when barriers around the world fall. The deal on environmental and worker protections is expected to pave the way for congressional approval of free-trade agreements with Peru and Panama, and raise the chances for passage of pacts with Colombia and South Korea. Each of those agreements would create new opportunities for U.S. exporters and investors while reducing prices for consumers. They would invite more of the kind of foreign investments that have created 6 million U.S. jobs.... Peru, Panama and Colombia are among the leading destinations for Florida exports.... In addition to their economic benefits, passage of the trade agreements with Peru, Panama and Colombia would strengthen U.S. ties with those countries. It would help counter the growing influence in Latin America of Venezuela's anti-American demagogue, Hugo Chavez.”

Losing Latin America (Wall Street Journal)

May 4, 2007

“A defeat for any of the three would do great harm to the Andean region, where democrats are battling Hugo Chávez's neo-socialist populism. Mr. Uribe, Peruvian President Alan Garcia and Panamanian President Martin Torrijos have all bet their futures on opening their economies to the U.S. If they're rebuffed, the local disciples of Mr. Chávez will say they were right not to trust the capitalist Yankees.... On economic grounds alone, the U.S. has everything to gain by approving these trade deals. Most Peruvian and Colombian exports already have duty-free access to the U.S. market through the Andean Trade Preferences Act. But U.S. manufacturing and farm exports heading south still face high tariff and non-tariff barriers. The regional financial center of Panama is especially attractive for U.S. services but is likewise a protected market.”



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 2008

www.ustr.gov

U.S. Business and Agriculture Support The U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement

“[O]pening markets and promoting fair trade rules are critical for California’s economy. ... In 2007, California exported over \$320 million to Colombia. ... California is one of the ten largest economies in the world with a gross state product of approximately \$1.8 trillion. As one of the largest exporting states, with exports to 222 countries around the world, international-related commerce accounts for approximately one-quarter of California's economy. Agreements like the proposed US- Colombia FTA ensure that the United States may continue to gain access to world markets, which will result in an improved economy and additional employment of Americans. The California Coalition for Free Trade urges you to support the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.”

*- The California Coalition for Free Trade, Letter to California Congressional Delegation,
September 15, 2008*

“[T]he Colombia agreement will do away with a trade relationship built on temporary unilateral preferences and replace it with one that is mutually beneficial, reciprocal, and permanent. In 1991, Congress approved the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), which has been renewed by bipartisan majorities several times in recent years. ... Colombians enjoy nearly free access to our market while our access to theirs remains limited. This agreement will remedy the unfairness of today’s U.S.- Colombia trade relationship by sweeping away most of Colombia’s tariffs immediately.”

*- Latin American Trade Coalition, Letter to Members of the United States Congress,
September 9, 2008*

"The facts are indisputable: trade agreements work for America. Every day that Congress continues to delay in passing the Colombia agreement, for example, costs U.S. manufacturers about \$2 million in additional import penalties they have to pay to sell U.S.-made goods in Colombia."

*- National Association of Manufacturers President John Engler, "Guess What? Manufactured Goods Trade With FTAs Moves Into Surplus For First Time,"
Press Release, July 15, 2008*

"[W]e all agreed unanimously that the democratic right thing to do was to approve the resolution to ask respectfully Madame Speaker Nancy Pelosi to place in a calendar vote the fair trade agreement for an up or down vote."

- League of United Latin American Citizens Florida State Director Bettina Aguilera, LULAC Press Release, July 12, 2008

"We are afraid of losing what we have built, afraid of what is starting to be a crisis of confidence in Colombia that is leading our clients to move elsewhere. The U.S. has always talked about why Latin America needs free trade. Well, now we're true believers in Colombia. Why turn us away?"

*- Medellin National Export Association President Luis Fernando González Usuga
quoted by Anthony Faiola, "Sustaining the Medellin Miracle,"
The Washington Post, July 11, 2008*

"The free trade agreements go a long way in supporting rural agriculture. With Colombia's current tariff for corn at 68 percent, the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will have immediate duty free access to the country's market for 2.1 million metric tons of corn."

- National Corn Growers Association President Ron Litterer, "Corn, Pork Producers Urge Congress to Support Free Trade Agreements," USAgNet, July 10, 2008

"[T]he economic and geopolitical importance of this agreement, underscored by recent events in the Andean region, merits immediate consideration and approval. ... Time is of the essence if we hope to retain a strong and economically vibrant textile and apparel industry in this country by ensuring a strong commercial relationship with our partners in Colombia. Please help us by ensuring bipartisan approval of the U.S.-Colombia TPA in the quickest manner possible."

- Letter to Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid, signed by 46 U.S. companies on behalf of the U.S. and Colombian textile, apparel, and retail supply chain, July 10, 2008

"WHEREAS, cities and metropolitan areas are recognized as the engines of the national economy representing over 85 percent of the nation's employment, income and gross domestic product, and trade liberalization provides benefits to the nation's cities in the form of increased employment and revenues; and ... **WHEREAS**, the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement levels the playing field for U.S. exporters and enhances competition, moving this important economic and geopolitical relationship beyond a one-way preference to reciprocal commitments and full partnership ... **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that The United States Conference of Mayors supports the speedy negotiation and passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and hereby affirms to all members of the United States Congress its strongest endorsement of such an agreement."

*- Resolution of the U.S. Conference of Mayors
(<http://usmayors.org/76thAnnualMeeting/ProposedResolutions.pdf>), June 2008*

"WHEREAS, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) policy on Free Trade acknowledges "the imposition of artificial barriers to free and open trade...are deterrents to American economic interests [and] **WHEREAS**, the U.S.-Colombia FTA levels the playing field and enhances competition, moving the United States-Colombia commercial relationship beyond a one-way preference to full partnership and reciprocal commitments; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that ALEC calls on Congress to re-instate the TPA rules and that Congress hold a Floor vote on the U.S.-Colombia FTA as it was negotiated under TPA; **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that ALEC call on Congress to pass and the President to sign implementing legislation for the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement."

*- Adopted by the CIED Task Force May 16, 2008. Approved by the ALEC Board of Directors,
June 2008*

"WHEREAS, The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement was renegotiated to include new labor and environment requirements consistent with the bipartisan compromise on trade policy announced by

Congress in May 2007 and endorsed by CSG in a resolution on trade policy adopted on June 13, 2007; and **WHEREAS**, U.S. exports are currently growing at historic levels providing vital economic activity in an otherwise troubled economic climate ... **NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments (CSG) expresses its support for the U.S. Colombia Free Trade Agreement; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that CSG urges Congress both to adopt the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and to ensure that the market access provisions, labor standards, environmental protections, and intellectual property protections included in the agreement are fully implemented.”

*- Resolution of the Council of State Governments,
at the CSG Spring State Trends and Leadership Forum in Lexington, Kentucky, May 31, 2008*

“As this week marks the one-year anniversary of the May 10 bipartisan agreement on trade reached between Congress and the Administration, the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) and its member companies, urge you to continue working with the President on a plan for timely Congressional consideration and approval of pending free trade agreements, beginning with the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. ... The economic and social arguments for the Colombia agreement are clear, as the FTA will afford U.S. exporters reciprocal access to the Colombian market and provide a structural framework to help Colombia continue its progress forward as a stable, democratic, economically viable global stakeholder. The U.S.-Colombia FTA deserves to be considered.”

*- William Reinsch, President, National Foreign Trade Council,
Letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, May 7, 2008*

“Nearly 8,000 U.S. companies export their products to Colombia, and over 80% of these are small and medium-sized companies that will benefit directly from CTPA. ... Building on these strong ties, CTPA will transform the current U.S.-Colombia trade relationship into a fairer, mutually beneficial partnership. ... CTPA will remedy the unfairness of today’s U.S.-Colombia trade relationship by sweeping away most of Colombia’s tariffs upon entry into force. In addition, the agreement will open services markets, secure the intellectual property of U.S. inventors, researchers, and creative artists, and introduce enforceable protections for worker rights and the environment. ... [W]e urge you to schedule hearings and subsequently a vote for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement as soon as possible.”

*- Latin America Trade Coalition —a broad-based group of more than 1,000 U.S. companies, business and agricultural organizations, and chambers of commerce;
Letter to Members of Congress, April 25, 2008*

“Together, our free trade partners accounted for nearly half of our exports, but only \$100 million of our \$37 billion January deficit – with notable trade balance improvements in NAFTA and CAFTA. Legislators opposing the Colombia and other pending trade agreements have got it entirely wrong. It’s amazing how they hold on to the myth that these agreements are the problem rather than the solution when it comes to the trade balance. Stalling these agreements is hurting our export and job prospects while preventing legislators from offering solutions to the real problems U.S. manufacturers face.”

*- NAM Press Release: Frank Vargo, Vice President for International Economic Affairs,
National Association of Manufacturers, March 11, 2008*

“The agreement [Colombia TPA] will strengthen our economic ties with and promote greater political stability in Colombia, benefiting our two nations and the hemisphere. Colombia’s government is on the right track on labor and other issues, and its people support this trade agreement.... As a strong ally, Colombia deserves our continued economic and political backing. This can be demonstrated by Congress taking up and passing Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement implementing legislation as

soon as possible in 2008.”

- *An Open Letter to Congress from numerous U.S. agricultural businesses and organizations, An Advertisement in Roll Call, January 28, 2008*

“The Congressional Hispanic Conference is pleased to continue to work for passage of our country’s Free Trade Agreements with Colombia and Panama. These Agreements would increase U.S. exports, create new jobs, and spur economic growth.”

- *Resident Commissioner Luis Fortuno, Congressional Hispanic Conference Press Release, January 28, 2008*

“An issue that the President made clear in his address is the importance of passing Free Trade Agreements with Colombia and Panama. I am a strong supporter of free trade with free and democratic nations. Not only does it strengthen our allies in the region, but also it creates jobs and economic opportunities for many in the U.S.”

- *Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Congressional Hispanic Conference Press Release, January 28, 2008*

“I am grateful for the President’s support of free trade agreements with Colombia, South Korea, and Panama. Those agreements would greatly benefit the United States by stimulating our economy and promoting the political stability of some of our closest friends. These agreements would level the playing field for American businesses, would incorporate responsible labor and environmental protections, and would cultivate our partnerships with key democratic allies.”

- *Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Congressional Hispanic Conference Press Release, January 28, 2008*

“We must also continue to help our friends and allies, such as Colombia, by doing all we can to assure that a free trade deal with our Colombian allies is approved by this Congress. We cannot and will not turn our back on our friends.”

- *Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Congressional Hispanic Conference Press Release, January 28, 2008*

“We urge Congress to strengthen American engagement and solidify American ties by approving the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) as expeditiously as possible during the 100th Congress.”

- *Emergency Committee for American Trade, An advertisement in The Hill, December 11, 2007*

“The Peru and Colombia FTAs... go well beyond the DR-CAFTA and other trade agreements in providing immediate benefits to U.S. farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses that will create thousands of new U.S. jobs. Many U.S. food and agricultural products will become eligible for duty free treatment in Colombia and Peru immediately upon entry into force of the FTAs, and virtually all U.S. products will receive duty free treatment over specified phase-in periods. According to the American Farm Bureau the Peru and Colombia Trade Promotion Agreements will increase U.S. farm exports by \$1.39 billion. USDA estimates for every million dollars of agricultural exports 13.4 jobs are created. Therefore, once fully implemented the Peru and Colombia agreements will provide over 18,000 new jobs due to increased agricultural exports.”

- *The Agriculture Coalition for Latin American Trade (42 food and agriculture organizations), Open Letter to Congress, July 18, 2007*

“The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA) significantly expands opportunities for U.S. companies in the second largest South American market. CTPA demonstrates to other developing countries that commitments to liberalization and internal economic reform are necessary for economic development, higher standards of living, and global competitiveness.”

- *Coalition of Services Industries, CSI Fact Sheet, July 18, 2007*

“The United States Hispanic Chamber of Congress, the largest advocate for America’s 2 million Hispanic-owned businesses, urges that you support the Panama, Peru, and Colombia Trade Agreements. The approval of these three trade agreements, which were formulated under a historic and precedent setting fair trade framework, and the need to negotiate similar agreements with Bolivia and Ecuador are of vital interest to securing our nation’s long term economic and diplomatic strength in the Western Hemisphere.... The primary beneficiaries of these three agreements will not be huge multinationals but small and medium sized companies with an average of less than 100 employees. Over 80 percent of current U.S. exporters to Peru, Panama, and Colombia are small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).”

- Michael Barrera, President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, USHCC Open Letter to Congress, July 17, 2007

“Our organization... views the [Peru, Colombia and Panama] trade agreements as vital to building relationships with important strategic allies of the United States in a region where anti-American sentiment has increased in recent years. We also feel strongly that the trade pacts, by shoring up the market economies and democratic institutions of these countries, would further efforts to combat poverty and promote human rights in the region.”

- Moishe Smith, President and Daniel S. Mariaschin, Executive Vice President, B’nai B’rith International, Letter to U.S. Representative Joe Crowley, July 17, 2007

“Because the U.S. wheat industry exports nearly half the crop it produces every year, increasing access to every market, large or small, is important. Nearly 30 percent of those exports flow to our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. Yet we are losing market share in South America to competitors such as Argentina that reap the benefits of the Mercosur agreement granting preferential or duty-free access. Approved FTAs with Peru and Colombia will eliminate import duties on U.S. wheat, and we estimate that will help bring in incremental sales of \$200 million per year to wheat growers, wheat industry stakeholders and their communities.”

- Joint statement of NAWG First Vice President David Cleavinger and U.S. Wheat Associates Chairman Ron Suppes, July 16, 2007

“Under your leadership, the trade agenda took important steps forward in recent months, beginning with the release in May of the ‘New Trade Policy for America.’ Despite concessions that are difficult for some U.S. industries, the vast majority of the business community has rallied to support this new approach to trade agreements so that America’s trade agenda can continue to move forward and U.S. business and workers can remain competitive.... Now, though, it is time to move quickly to review and approve the pending TPAs so that U.S.-based manufacturers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers, who currently face formidable barriers to their exports to Peru, Colombia, and Panama, can expand their exports to these markets.... In the case of Colombia, delay plays into the hands of those who do not support democracy, economic development, and social progress. Few countries in the world have advanced so rapidly in recent years as Colombia. President Alvaro Uribe is the most popular elected leader in the Americas today because of his successful record of reducing violent crime, generating economic opportunities, investing in social programs, controlling narco-trafficking, and protecting human rights. To defer consideration of the U.S.-Colombia agreement will do nothing to advance this positive agenda; on the contrary, it has a much greater likelihood of undermining Colombia’s dramatic recent progress.”

- Latin America Trade Coalition, Letter to Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Finance and House Committee on Ways & Means, July 12, 2007

“Now is the time for Congress to vote on the Peru, Colombia and Panama TPAs. These three agreements would increase U.S. agricultural exports by nearly \$1.5 billion once fully implemented.... Passage of the Peru and Colombia TPAs would provide U.S. agriculture the same open access to Peru and Colombia as those countries have in our market under ATPDEA. Congress’s quick passage of the Peru, Colombia and Panama TPAs will help demonstrate to U.S. farmers and ranchers that Congress is committed to promoting U.S. agricultural trade.”

**- Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation,
Letter to House Democratic Leadership, July 12, 2007**

“Central and South America are vital trading partners for the United States. In terms of high-tech goods, the United States held a \$14 billion trade surplus with the region in 2006, nearly 25 percent larger than it was in 2000. We need to continue to open markets with our southern neighbors by enacting the pending Free Trade Agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Peru and by working with other countries in the region to lower barriers to trade.”

- Rob Mulligan, Senior Vice President International, AeA, AeA Press Release, June 13, 2007

“The Northwest Horticultural Council supports passage of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.... Colombia, a country of 41 million people, agreed to reduce its tariffs on apples, pears and cherries to zero immediately upon enactment of the agreement. Currently tariffs are 15 percent. Colombia does not pose an import threat to our industry and there are no current phytosanitary barriers preventing the export of our products to Colombia. During the 2004 season apple exports to Colombia increased 217% (to 359,313 cartons) from the previous season in large part due to Colombia raising its tariff on Chilean apples (and pears) from zero to 15%, where it currently remains.”

**- Northwest Horticultural Council, NHC Policy Position
(<http://www.nwhort.org/nhcpublish/ColombiaFTA.html>), May 25, 2007**

“Urgency has brought together a unified response from the U.S. textile and apparel industry supply chain organizations. It is vital to the Andean and American economies that the U.S. - Colombia and U.S./Peru trade agreements be approved as soon as possible. Those agreements will provide our industry with permanent, reciprocal and immediate duty-free access for ALL apparel and textiles. Now that congressional leaders and the Bush administration have agreed on a bipartisan trade policy framework, we need to move immediately to secure approval of the pending Andean trade promotion agreements. Moreover, the existing duty-free program with the Andean region needs to be maintained until those agreements can take full effect.”

**- Kevin M. Burke, President and CEO, American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA),
AAFA Press Release, May 11, 2007**

“Getting this FTA in place is essential for the wheat industry. Our Board Team reports that America’s official trade relationship with Colombia has fostered an environment of economic and political stability and has the potential to become a regional foreign policy success story.”

- Alan Tracy, President, U.S. Wheat Associates, USW Press Release, March 15, 2007

“[T]he Colombia and Peru Trade Promotion Agreements are widely viewed as being the best ever negotiated on behalf of U.S. agriculture. Many U.S. food and agricultural products will become eligible for duty-free treatment in these countries immediately upon entry into force of the agreements, and virtually all will receive duty-free treatment over specified phase-in periods.”

**- The Agriculture Coalition for Latin American Trade (42 food and agriculture organizations),
Open Letter to Congress, February 20, 2007**

“This [Colombian] agreement is a critical building block of U.S. hemispheric engagement. With it, the United States gains additional access to global markets for U.S. products, while ensuring that we continue to build the strategic relationship with one of our most important hemispheric allies. Rapid passage of the agreement will be an important signal to the rest of the hemisphere of U.S. reliability and partnership.”

**- Susan Segal, President and CEO, Council of the Americas,
COA Press Release, November 22, 2006**

“Colombia is a growing market for U.S. goods and services, and this FTA will fortify our existing trade partnership by expanding opportunities for the U.S. business community and American workers. We congratulate negotiators from both countries for working to achieve a successful outcome. Today’s signing is proof of that hard work. While this agreement will open markets and benefit the many U.S. companies with operations, facilities or interests in trade with Colombia, it will also bring increased stabilization and economic growth to Central and South America.”

**- Bill Reinsch, President, National Foreign Trade Council, NFTC Press Release,
November 22, 2006**

“The FTA is a policy priority for the U.S. business community, including the burgeoning Hispanic American business community, which is uniquely positioned to build and benefit from a stronger two-way trading relationship between the U.S. and Colombia. We are pleased with the signing and now look to Congress to ratify the FTA as soon as possible.”

**- Anne Alonzo, Senior Vice President, National Foreign Trade Council and Co-Chair of the
Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade, NFTC Press Release, November 22, 2006**

“Colombia and Peru represent important and growing export markets for U.S. textile products, totaling nearly \$200 million a year. These FTAs are essential if the Peru and Colombia markets are to continue to grow and we urge Congress to quickly pass implementing legislation for these agreements. At \$16 billion a year in exports, the U.S. textile industry is the third largest exporter of textile products in the world. These exports depend on trade agreements like the Colombia and Peru FTAs which ensure that FTA partners, not Asian exporters, are the true beneficiaries of these agreements.... The Peru and Colombia FTAs are key components in making the Western Hemisphere a competitive alternative to Asia. With 2.2 million textile and apparel workers in the NAFTA, CAFTA and Andean region, textile producers in the United States and apparel manufacturers in the larger region have integrated their production lines. These FTAs will create the necessary predictability and stability that is needed to help ensure this region remains viable.”

**- Cass Johnson, President, National Council of Textile Organizations, NCTO Press Release,
October 19, 2006**

“The United States and Colombia are not just economic partners, but allies in the war against terror and narcotics. That's why it may be the most important bilateral relationship in the hemisphere, and it's time for our economic relationship to reflect the bond of friendship. Let's do away with temporary, unilateral preferences and establish a foundation that is mutually beneficial, reciprocal and permanent. It's time to eliminate all trade and investment barriers between our two countries. The first day the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement goes into effect, Colombia's \$200,000-plus duty on each large off-highway truck made in the United States will be completely eliminated. Caterpillar products will be more competitive in Colombia, which in turn will help Colombian customers be more competitive in the world. The agreement will also enhance the rule of law and bolster implementation of internationally recognized worker's rights. It will strengthen protection and enforcement of U.S. trademarks, patents and copyrights, creating new opportunities for innovation and creative industries in Colombia.”

**- Tom Gales, Vice President for Latin America, Caterpillar Inc., Caterpillar Press Release,
October 5, 2006**

“The American Farm Bureau Federation [AFBF] board of directors voted today to support the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. AFBF economic analysis shows the total increase in U.S. farm exports could exceed \$690 million annually after full implementation of the agreement. The Colombia TPA allows the United States to compete with Colombia’s other trading partners that are currently supplying a large percentage of the country’s food and fiber market through other preferential trade agreements. The TPA also provides balance by providing U.S. products with the same duty-free access already enjoyed by Colombian products exported to the United States. The Colombia TPA will greatly increase exports of a wide range of farm products and have a positive effect on the overall American agricultural sector. In all, this agreement helps further our goal of establishing greater worldwide market access for U.S. farmers.”

**- Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation, Farm Bureau Press Release,
October 4, 2006**

“The completion of a free trade agreement (FTA) between the United States and Colombia in February provides improved access for U.S. rice to that South American country. This agreement represents a great achievement for negotiators and the U.S. rice industry because Colombia had sought to minimize access for U.S. rice, and it was one of the last agricultural items to ‘close’ in the negotiations.”

**- Robert Cummings, Vice President for International Policy, USA Rice Federation, USA Rice
Update, April 2006**

“ECAT welcomes the conclusion of a trade agreement with Colombia which covers all sectors and subsectors of trade and investment and will provide substantial new market access opportunities for many U.S. consumer and industrial goods, farm products, and services and for U.S. investment. Colombia, like Peru, represents an important economic as well as strategic partner in the region.”

**- Cal Cohen, President, Emergency Committee for American Trade, ECAT Press Release,
March 2, 2006**

“GMA commends the U.S. negotiators for concluding this comprehensive agreement with Colombia. Under the accord, 50,000 tons of sugar will be allowed to enter duty-free annually into the U.S. While we are disappointed that the high U.S. tariff will remain on sugar, we are pleased that the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative resisted calls for exclusion of this commodity.

**- Sarah Thorn, then-Senior Director of International Trade, Grocery Manufacturers Association,
GMA Press Release, February 28, 2006**

“Pork was one of the most controversial sectors in the talks. Nevertheless, [then-] U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman and USDA Secretary Mike Johanns and their staffs came through with a fantastic deal for U.S. pork producers. We are very excited about this agreement because it will provide significant new export opportunities to 43 million consumers in Colombia. Under the terms of the deal, the tariffs on some pork and pork products will be eliminated immediately while the tariffs on others will be phased out over a five-year period.”

**- Don Buhl, President, National Pork Producers Council and a pork producer from Tyler,
Minnesota, NPPC Press Release, February 27, 2006**

“In late February, the U.S. concluded negotiations with Colombia on a free trade agreement that would eliminate Colombia's import duty of 15 percent for U.S. apples upon enactment. A 15 percent apple import duty would remain in effect for other non-Andean countries, including Chile, a major U.S. competitor. Colombia does not presently have SPS import restrictions that impede U.S. apple exports.

Colombia was the thirteenth largest export market for U.S. apple exports in 2005. Exports more than doubled from 2004 to 2005, increasing from 216,784 boxes to 558,966 boxes with a value of \$2.4 million and \$6.4 million, respectively. With a population of 41 million, the Colombian market offers additional export growth potential for the U.S. apple industry with elimination of its 15 percent import duty. This free trade agreement offers immediate open market access to U.S. apple exports upon implementation. US Apple urges Congress to approve the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement in order to expand U.S. apple export opportunities.”

- U.S. Apple Association; Issue Paper

Letters Of Support For U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

Letters from Congressional members and Administrative Officials

- ✚ Congressional Letter in Support of the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement by the Republican members of the House Committee on Ways & Means
- ✚ Open Letter to Congress from Former Commanders of the U.S. Southern Command Supporting the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement
- ✚ Open Letter to Congress from Former Senior Officials in Democratic Administrations and Democratic Members of Congress Supporting the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement
- ✚ Open Letter to Congressional Democrats on Hemispheric Trade Expansion
- ✚ Open Letter to Congress from Former Secretaries of Commerce in Support of the Pending Free Trade Agreements

Letters from Foreign Leaders (Non-Officials Translations are included)

- ✚ Central American Ambassadors (Ambassador of Costa Rica, F. Tomas Duenas; Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, Favio Dario Espinal; Ambassador of El Salvador, Rene A. Leon; Ambassador of Guatemala, Francisco Villangran; Ambassador of Honduras, Roberto Flores Bermudez)
- ✚ President of the Republic of Peru, Alan Garcia Perez
- ✚ Speaker of the Colombian House of Representatives, Oscar Arboleda Palacio
- ✚ European Commissioner for External Trade, Peter Mandelson
- ✚ President of the United Mexican States, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
- ✚ President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias Sánchez
- ✚ Central American leaders (President of El Salvador, Elias Antonio Saca; President of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya; President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra; and President of Guatemala, Oscar Berger)
- ✚ Excerpts from speech of the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, at the Council on Foreign Relations
- ✚ President of the Republic of Chile, Michelle Bachelet Jeria

Letters from Mayors, Governors, and State Legislators

- ✚ Governor Heineman and 12 Agriculture Industry Leaders (Nebraska)
- ✚ Letter in Support of the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement from 17 Mayors
- ✚ Governor Sonny Perdue (Georgia)
- ✚ Mayor Stephen R. Reed (Harrisburg, PA)
- ✚ Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. (Utah)
- ✚ Mayor C. Ray Nagin (New Orleans, LA)
- ✚ Mayor Shirley Franklin (Atlanta, GA)
- ✚ Governor Charlie Crist (Florida)
- ✚ Governor Timothy M. Kaine (Virginia)

- ✚ Mayor Boyd W. Dunn (Chandler, AZ)
- ✚ Mayor Tom Leppert (Dallas, TX), Mayor Mike Moncrief (Ft. Worth, TX), and Mayor Robert Cluck (Arlington, TX)
- ✚ State Senator Don Balfour (Georgia)
- ✚ Mayor Mick Cornett (Oklahoma City, OK)
- ✚ Mayor Manuel A. Diaz (Miami, FL)
- ✚ Mayor Jerry Sanders (San Diego, CA)
- ✚ Mayor Brad Cole (Carbondale, IL)
- ✚ Mayor Curt Pringle (Anaheim, CA)
- ✚ Mayor Richard M. Daley (Chicago, IL)

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McCrery
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1139-E Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Chairman, Sub-Committee on Trade
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Wally Herger
Ranking Member, Sub-Committee on Trade
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel, Ranking Member McCrery, Chairman Levin, and Ranking Member Herger:

Thank you for your leadership over the past year in forging a new bipartisan consensus on U.S. trade policy. We were pleased to see this breakthrough result in Congressional approval of the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement last year. We believe this consensus represents a positive step forward that can pave the way for consideration of the pending U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

While thoughtful people disagree about whether Congress should approve the Colombia agreement, we believe these disagreements may best be acknowledged and addressed by the Committee on Ways and Means holding a public hearing on the agreement. Specifically, a number of stakeholders have raised concerns about the level of labor violence in Colombia.

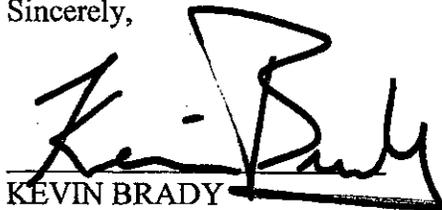
A full public hearing that focuses the attention of the Committee on the question of the level of labor violence in Colombia; the potential impact of the trade agreement on the obligation and ability of the Colombian Government to address the issue of labor violence; the broader impact of the agreement on businesses and workers in both the United States and Colombia; and the impact of the agreement on our long-term security interests would demonstrate the importance of these issues to the Committee.

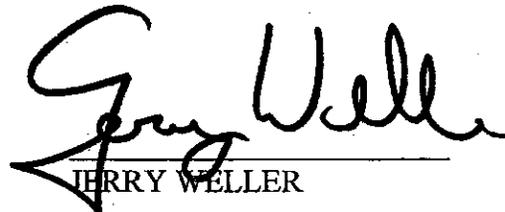
Such a hearing would allow for a full airing of the concerns of labor leaders in both the United States and Colombia and provide a venue for the Committee to signal its commitment to addressing these concerns. A hearing would further the spirit of bipartisanship established by the May 10th agreement in moving forward on a positive trade agenda that benefits workers and businesses in both countries.

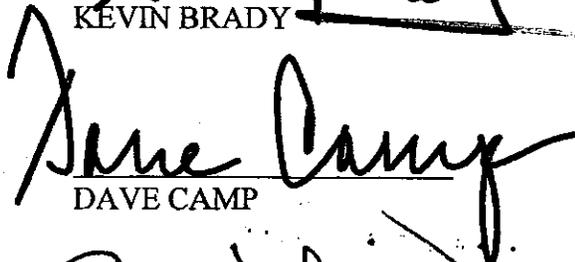
To address these important questions, to consider the concerns of our colleagues, and to hear the benefits others believe the agreement can offer, we urge you to begin the process of considering the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement by scheduling a hearing on the agreement as soon as possible.

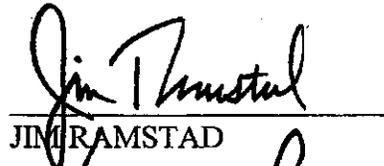
Thank you again for your leadership, and we look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

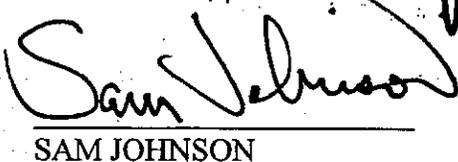
Sincerely,


KEVIN BRADY

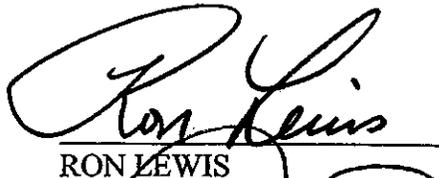

JERRY WELLER

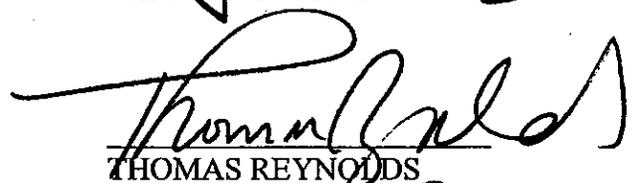

DAVE CAMP

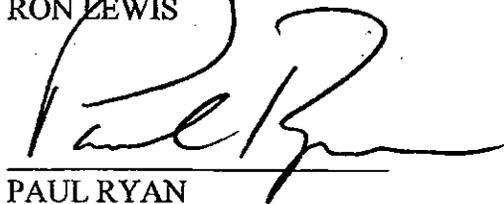

JIM RAMSTAD


SAM JOHNSON


KENNY HULSHOF


RON LEWIS

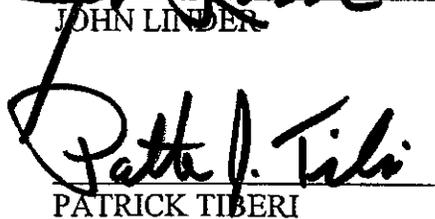

THOMAS REYNOLDS

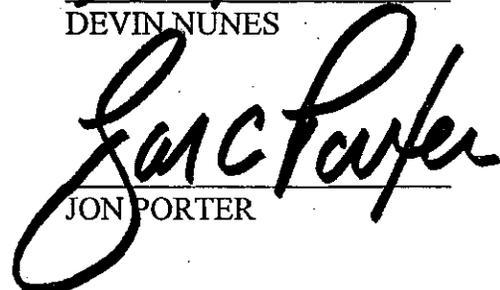

PAUL RYAN


ERIC CANTOR


JOHN LINDER


DEVIN NUNES


PATRICK TIBERI


JON PORTER

Open Letter to Congress

from Former Commanders of the U.S. Southern Command

Supporting the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement

We are writing to urge your support for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. This vital agreement will advance U.S. interests in Colombia, a strategically located country that is arguably our closest ally in Latin America. It will also underscore our deep commitment to stability and growth in the strategically important Andean region, which depends on Colombia's continued progress as a resilient and democratic society.

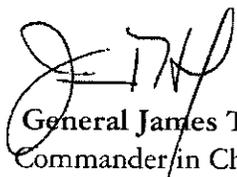
Colombia's transformation over the past decade is a triumph of brave and principled Colombians. It is also a remarkable achievement of bipartisan U.S. foreign policy. Violence has fallen to its lowest level in a generation, and 45,000 fighters have been demobilized as the country's narco-guerrilla groups have lost legitimacy. While drug-trafficking poses a continuing threat, Colombia's leaders have eliminated two-thirds of its opium production, and more than 500 traffickers have been extradited during the Uribe administration — by far the most extraditions from any country to the United States.

Colombia's economic resurgence has been a critical factor in its recent progress. Robust investment has boosted economic growth and development. The creation of new jobs has provided tens of thousands of Colombians with long-term alternatives to narcotics trafficking or illegal emigration.

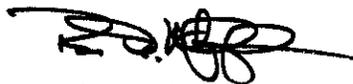
The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will build upon these recent advances to enhance the long-term prospects for peace, stability, and development in Colombia. Providing new incentives for investment and job creation, this landmark accord will help ensure that Colombia stays on the path of economic openness, the rule of law, and transparency.

It is in our national interest to help Colombia progress along the road toward democratic consolidation and economic development. This trade agreement will advance U.S. security and economic interests by forging a deeper partnership. Finally, approving this agreement will meet our duty to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Colombians as they have stood by the United States as friends and allies. For all of these reasons, we strongly urge Congress to approve the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

Sincerely,



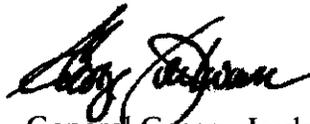
General James T. Hill
Commander in Chief,
United States Southern Command 2002-2004



General Barry McCaffrey
Commander in Chief,
United States Southern Command 1994-1996



General Peter Pace
Commander in Chief,
United States Southern Command 2000-2001



General George Joulwan
Commander in Chief,
United States Southern Command 1990-1993



General Charles E. Wilhelm
Commander in Chief,
United States Southern Command 1997-2000

Open Letter From Former Senior Officials In Democratic Administrations and Democratic Members Of Congress Supporting The United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement

We, the undersigned, who have served in senior positions in the U.S. government, strongly urge Congress to take up and approve the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement this year. We believe this Agreement is in both our vital national security and economic interests. We feel that the treaty should be considered as soon as possible and that any obstacles be quickly and amicably resolved.

There is an overwhelming national security imperative to approving the Colombia FTA. There is a growing animus in some parts of the hemisphere toward the U.S., but Colombia has long been a traditional friend, and Colombian President Uribe has been a strong and faithful ally of the United States. To turn our back on the Colombia FTA would be a severe blow to that relationship and would send a very negative message to our friends in a volatile region. It is no coincidence that the leaders of Mexico, Chile, Canada, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Peru among others, have strongly supported this treaty in the name of hemispheric solidarity. Failure to act would strengthen those in the region who would argue that we leave our friends isolated and that the U.S. is disinterested in the hemisphere. Since U.S. assistance for Plan Colombia was approved in the Clinton Administration, more than \$5 billion has been provided with bipartisan support that has helped Colombia to strengthen democracy, counter narco-traffickers, and greatly reduce levels of violence. The Colombia FTA must be seen as part of this commitment.

As recent events in the Andean region show, Colombia is fighting a brutal narco-terrorist insurgency by groups such as the FARC, which still holds some 750 kidnap victims, including three U.S. civilian contractors. In a rough neighborhood, Colombia promotes a model of open market democracy that supports fundamental U.S. national interests, but which some in Latin America openly scorn. With U.S. assistance, there has been a dramatic improvement in Colombia's security, with homicides down 40 percent, kidnapping by 83 percent, and terrorist attacks down by 76 percent, since 2002. The government of Colombia has regained control of many areas previously held by illegal armed groups, but much more needs to be done.

In addition, President Uribe has shown great personal courage in placing his government at the front lines of the war against narco-traffickers, who directly threaten the lives of American citizens here at home. Under his leadership, and with substantial assistance from the United States, Colombia has reduced cocaine production, cut opium poppy production by almost three-quarters, and nearly tripled the seizures of cocaine base destined for the U.S. between 2000 and 2005. Overall, there has been improvement in the Colombian government's efforts at interdiction, fighting precursors, and reducing the overall effect of drugs on the economy. Each year, approximately 400 metric tons is eradicated or interdicted by U.S.-Colombia efforts. In a testament to its close bilateral partnership with the United States, Colombia has dramatically increased their extradition of criminals to our country, from less than 100 when President Uribe took office in 2002 to well over 600 now.

We abhor and condemn in the strongest terms the violence against trade unionists, and all human rights abuses that have occurred in Colombia. Some acts of violence against trade unionists are

committed by illegal armed groups like FARC. However, while the situation in Colombia is far from perfect, there has been substantial progress on all fronts since President Uribe took office. For example, the number of homicides of trade unionists in Colombia continues to be far lower than the overall homicide rate for the general population. These improvements coincided with a notable downturn in attacks by paramilitaries and the FARC beginning in 2002, underscoring the linkable between levels of violence and human rights abuses in Colombia and the activities of illegal armed groups.

The government of Colombia has created a program that provides special security protection to some 9400 individuals, including 1900 trade unionists. In October 2006, the Prosecutor General's Office created a special labor unit to address priority cases of violence against trade unionists. Another key government initiative is to improve the administration of justice in Colombia to deliver better legal services and address a large backlog of crimes that were never brought to trial. In a separate initiative, President Uribe has led an effort to investigate and prosecute any and all government officials with paramilitary ties.

Defeating the FTA would hardly promote cooperation needed to advance the human rights and anti-violence campaign.

From an economic perspective, this is a "win-win" situation. Our market is already substantially open to Colombia's products, with over 90 percent of Colombian exports entering the United States duty free, while U.S. exports to Colombia face significant barriers, with tariffs up to 35 percent for industrial and consumer goods and much higher tariffs for agricultural products. In 2007, Colombia exported \$9.4 billion to the United States, virtually all of it duty-free as a result of the U.S. trade preference programs, while U.S. exporters shipped \$8.6 billion to Colombia under the handicap of significant Colombian tariffs, which would be removed over time by the FTA. Today Colombia has double-digit tariffs on paper and paper products, transportation equipment, building products and consumer goods. U.S. agricultural exports of over \$1 billion all face a duty there (for example, 15 percent Colombia tariffs on U.S. apples and oranges), while 99.9 percent of Colombia's agricultural exports to the United States were duty-free. The FTA will immediately eliminate tariffs on more than 80 percent of American exports of industrial and consumer goods, and over time, 100 percent, including information technology products, agricultural products, construction equipment, medical equipment, and electrical power generation equipment. This agreement will help our balance of trade.

We see the FTA as an important tool to support Colombia's social and economic development. Already, increased trade has helped Colombia's economy grow with GDP increasing from 1.7 percent in 2002 to 7 percent in 2007, and with poverty being reduced almost 20 percent since 2002. U.S. exports to the 14 nations with whom the United States has an FTA have grown some 40 percent faster than U.S. exports to the rest of the world. There is every reason to believe this will happen with Colombia.

We also hope that Congress will favorably consider reauthorizing and strengthening the Trade Adjustment Assistance program to help workers transition to new jobs.

With the sustained help of the United States and the strong leadership of President Uribe, Colombia has, in the words of a recent report, moved "back from the brink" of being a failed state to being an example of positive transformation in the world. Supporting this agreement will ensure our active role in maintaining stability and security in our hemisphere. Colombia has earned the support and

friendship of the United States. To delay passing the U.S.-Colombia FTA this year would send a negative signal to one of our closest allies in Latin America, and would be seized upon by our country's opponents as a sign of U.S. inconstancy at a critical time.

Bernard Aronson, former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs

Ambassador Harriet Babbitt, former Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States

The Honorable James Bacchus, former Congressman (Florida) and former chairman, Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization

The Honorable Michael D. Barnes, former Congressman (Maryland) and former chairman, Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, House Foreign Affairs Committee

Rand Beers, former Assistant Secretary of State

The Honorable David Boren, former Senator (Oklahoma) and former Governor (Oklahoma)

The Honorable John Breaux, former Congressman and Senator (Louisiana) and former Senate Majority Whip

The Honorable William S. Cohen, former Congressman and Senator (Maine) and former Secretary of Defense

W. Bowman Cutter, former Assistant to the President for Economic Policy

William Daley, former Secretary of Commerce

John Deutch, former Deputy Secretary of Defense and former Director of Central Intelligence 1995-96

The Honorable Calvin M. "Cal" Dooley, former Congressman (California)

Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat, former Chief Domestic Policy Adviser to President Carter and former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury during the Clinton Administration

Ambassador Richard N. Gardner, former Ambassador to Italy and Spain

The Honorable Sam M. Gibbons, former Congressman (Florida) and former chairman, House Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Dan Glickman, former Congressman (Kansas) and former Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Bob Graham, former Governor (Florida) and former Senator (Florida)

Ambassador Marc Grossman, former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Honorable Lee Hamilton, former Congressman (Indiana) and former chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

John Hamre, former Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Honorable James R. Jones, former Congressman (Oklahoma) and former chairman, House Budget Committee, and former Ambassador to Mexico

The Honorable Bob Kerrey, former Governor (Nebraska) and former Senator (Nebraska)

General Barry R. McCaffrey, former Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Armed Forces Southern Command

Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty, former White House Chief of Staff and former Special Envoy for the Americas

Robert A. Pastor, former Director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs, National Security Council

Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and former Ambassador (United Nations, El Salvador, India, Israel, Jordan, Nigeria, and Russia)

Ambassador Peter Romero, former Ambassador (Ecuador) and former Assistant Secretary of State

The Honorable Patricia Schroeder, former Congresswoman (Colorado)

The Honorable Donna Shalala, former Secretary of Health and Human Services

Ira Shapiro, former General Counsel and Ambassador, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

The Honorable Steve Solarz, former Congressman (New York)

Maurice Sonnenberg, former member President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and former Vice Chair, National Commission on Terrorism

Ambassador Alexander F. Watson, former Ambassador (Peru), former Deputy Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations, and former Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere

Frank G. Wisner, former Ambassador (Zambia, Egypt, Philippines, India) and former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

R. James Woolsey, former Director of Central Intelligence 1993-95

An Open Letter to Congressional Democrats on Hemispheric Trade Expansion

Latin America is up for grabs. As Democrats, we are deeply concerned.

Not since the end of the Cold War has US influence in the region been so tenuous or our interests so clearly at stake. The Summit of the Americas agenda, agreed by consensus at the instigation of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, has frayed. Anti-US populism is loud and getting louder. Venezuela's leader, emboldened by high energy prices, is aggressively promoting an alternative vision for Latin America and the Caribbean. Divisions among our neighbors are deepening with serious implications for the United States. Even Castro may be back in the game.

Within this new reality, the United States Congress faces a decision of historic consequence: whether, by standing with those in Latin America who have stood with us, to build the economy and create jobs by opening markets. Along with comprehensive immigration reform, increased development assistance, and renewed support for Plan Colombia, there is nothing more important for US national and economic security interests in the region than passing trade agreements with nations whose leaders have made politically-courageous efforts to link their economies to ours.

The decision should not be in doubt. Now that a deal has been struck by Democratic leaders in Congress and the Administration on a bipartisan trade policy framework, it is time to get behind pending agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Peru. It would be the height of irony were we to talk of "losing" Latin America while refusing to take actions that would directly support fundamental relationships and interests in the region.

That is not to say everything is perfect in the countries in question. Far from it. Both proponents and opponents of the Colombia agreement have noted the high levels of violence there, as well as recent corruption and wiretapping scandals. But the level of violence in Colombia—though still too high—has steadily and significantly declined under President Uribe. Rather than hiding the scandals or minimizing them, Colombia is taking steps to root them out and cleanse the political system, even while recognizing that more must be done, including bringing to justice those who have committed crimes against unionists.

These are serious matters, and Democrats are right to bring them up and insist on progress. But walking away from the Colombia trade agreement or postponing it until conditions are perfect would send an unambiguous signal to our friends and opponents alike that the United States is an unreliable partner without a vision for cooperation in our hemisphere. Colombia would certainly re-evaluate its relationship with the United States, a process that is already underway. And the same is true with Panama, Peru, and others such as Uruguay and Brazil who are making courageous political decisions to enhance relations with the United States despite strong domestic and external political pressure.

As Democrats, we fully recognize that asking the US Congress to vote on these trade agreements is politically charged. Nonetheless, rejecting these agreements would set back regional US interests for a generation. What interests are at stake? In the first instance, US economic opportunity. Because the fact is that the United States is already virtually open to products from Colombia, Panama, and Peru through unilateral trade preference programs, *but those economies do not give reciprocal benefits to the United States*. Far from being “job killing,” these trade agreements would open markets wider to US goods and services and therefore *support* jobs in the United States.

Second, for the past 15 years, the United States on a bipartisan basis has supported economic growth in the Andean region in opposition to drug traffickers and guerrilla movements. In the hemispheric fight against illegal narcotics, trade agreements with Colombia and Peru would lock in trade relations for the long-term, drawing the kind of direct foreign investment that all nations need to develop, while also opening new markets. US exports would increase, economic opportunities would be created, cooperation against illegal narcotics would be maintained, ultimately supporting democratic governance in a troubled region.

Third, US regional influence is at risk. Peru’s President Garcia has stood up to Venezuela’s Chavez at a time when virtually all other regional leaders have kept mum. He would be unlikely to do so again were Peru’s trade agreement to go down. As for Panama, President Torrijos has publicly welcomed US participation in the expansion of the strategically significant canal, and a trade agreement with Panama would surely improve the competitiveness of US companies bidding on the massive canal expansion project. It would also, importantly, lock in a mutually rewarding relationship even as former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega is set to be released from his Florida jail cell where he has served time for drug trafficking.

From the Good Neighbor Policy, to the Alliance for Progress, to a focus on human rights and the Summit of the Americas, Democratic leadership has been pivotal to the promotion of US interests in the Western Hemisphere. The time for leadership is again at hand. We must not walk away now.

Former Members of the Congress and Senate

James Bacchus, Michael Barnes, Don Bonker, Tony Coelho, Cal Dooley, Sam Gibbons, Bob Graham, Bill Hughes, Bennett Johnston, Harry Johnston, Jim Jones, Buddy MacKay, Sam Nunn, Leon Panetta

Former Cabinet Officials, Ambassadors, and Foreign and Trade Policy Advisors

Anne Alonzo, Bruce Babbitt, Harriet Babbitt, Rand Beers, Sandy Berger, Henry Cisneros, Nelson Cunningham, Stuart Eizenstat, Eric Farnsworth, Richard Feinberg, Gordon Giffin, Marc Ginsberg, Dan Glickman, Ed Gresser, Anthony Harrington, Chuck Manatt, David Marchick, Will Marshall, Mack McLarty, Robert Pastor, Peter Romero, David Rothkopf, Chris Sabatini, Ronald Scheman, Donna Shalala, Ira Shapiro, Maurice Sonnenberg, Alexander Watson, Jonathan Winer

*Letter from Former Secretaries of Commerce
To Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate*

December 4, 2007

To Members of Congress:

The 110th Congress has an opportunity to demonstrate bipartisan leadership on the future of America's economic policy by approving Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between the United States and Peru, Panama, Colombia and Korea. The United States needs the advantage these agreements provide to continue to expand economic growth at home and abroad. Furthermore, for the first time, leaders from both parties have agreed that the trade policy framework will strengthen labor and environmental protections in these countries.

Bilateral free trade agreements have proved to be one of the best ways to open up foreign markets to U.S. exporters. Last year, trade with countries with which the United States has FTAs was significantly greater than their relative share of the global economy. Although comprising only about 7 percent of global GDP (not including the United States), the 14 FTA countries accounted for over 42 percent of U.S. exports. Clearly, the four new FTAs would allow room for more growth.

American exports have been growing at 11 percent in 2007, a rate that is two and half times as fast as the 4.4 percent increase in U.S. imports. With this ongoing surge in exports, the U.S. trade deficit has fallen by 7.7 percent so far this year, compared to the same period in 2006. Highlighting the importance of exports, other recently released data on the economy showed that export expansion has accounted for 40 percent of U.S. economic growth over the last year. The Department of Commerce estimates that 5.69 million American jobs were supported by the export of manufactured goods and millions more jobs by service industries' exports.

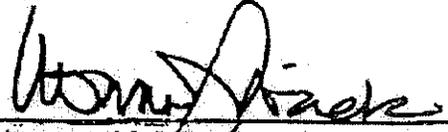
Good trade agreements remove barriers, expand trade and help support incomes and better paying jobs in America. Consumers, workers, companies, farmers and ranchers benefit from agreements to further open global markets to U.S. exports. The overwhelming majority of exports from Peru, Colombia, Panama and Korea already enter the United States duty free while U.S. exports to these countries face significant tariffs. American producers deserve the same equal treatment. These FTAs will level the playing field and open new export opportunities for American business and agriculture.

We need to continue our record of exporting success and resultant economic growth with the passage of these four Free Trade Agreements.

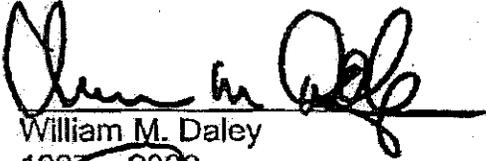
Sincerely,



Donald L. Evans
2001 - 2005



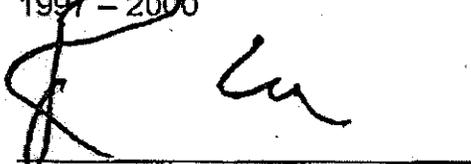
Norman Y. Mineta
2000 - 2001



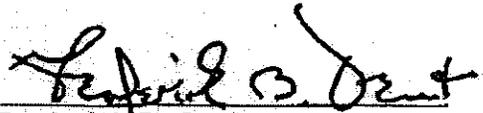
William M. Daley
1997 - 2000



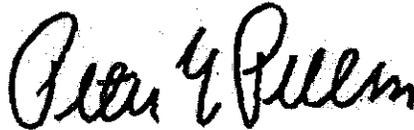
Barbara H. Franklin
1992 - 1993



Robert A. Mosbacher
1989 - 1992



Frederick B. Dent
1973 - 1975



Peter G. Peterson
1972 - 1973

CC: The Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States
The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, U.S. Secretary of Commerce
The Honorable Susan Schwab, U.S. Trade Representative

April 29, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

Dear Madam Speaker:

Since the reestablishment of democracy in Latin America, the countries of our region have made great efforts to fight poverty and social inequality, create opportunities, and improve the quality of life of our peoples. Our efforts are based on a commitment to social justice, the rule of law and democratic governance. In these efforts, the United States has been our friend, our neighbor and our ally.

In the last 20 years, relations between the United States and Latin America have been strengthened by growing economic and commercial ties. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have offered a new partnership based not only on the continuation of unilateral trade preference programs but also on the goal of eventually moving forward to bilateral or regional trade schemes that would secure benefits for all.

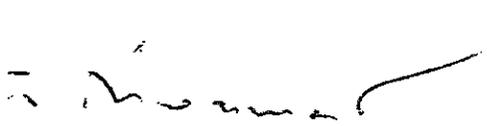
Latin America has seen this partnership as a promising one. Heads of State in the region have embraced the idea as a positive sign that the United States is bringing the region together, trying to work with us as partners for a more prosperous common future. Furthermore, it is clear that the friendship between the United States and Latin America cannot be based exclusively on international cooperation, as important as that is, or solely on unilateral trade preference programs, which have limited scope, duration and certainty. Our countries are instead looking for new opportunities and fair treatment.

In this context, trade agreements are an important tool for fighting poverty and generating opportunities in the Hemisphere. Chile, with the most open economy in Latin America, has signed free trade agreements with many countries around the world and has managed to reduce poverty by almost two thirds in the last 17 years. This is an example that many wish to follow, because the fewer goods that are exported by Latin American countries, the higher risk they face of exporting people through massive migration toward developed countries

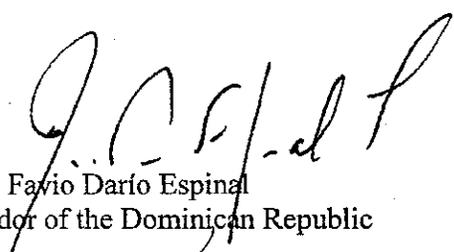
Latin America and the United States are joined by geography, culture and common values. For many years, the exchange of goods and services across borders has been a vital factor in maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship. The approval of the free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia would be another step toward deepening that relationship, toward fair and equitable integration of our nations, and most importantly, toward securing the stability and peace of the Western Hemisphere.

With deep respect, we would like to emphasize the importance of the United States Congress's approving this agreement, considering the substantial benefits not only for the people of Colombia but also for the people of the United States and, ultimately, for the whole region.

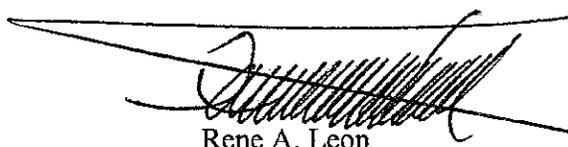
We express our highest and most distinguished consideration to you and commend you for your work in forging a stronger relationship among all our nations.



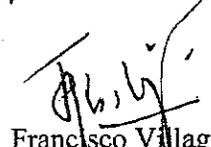
F. Tomás Dueñas
Ambassador of Costa Rica



Favio Darío Espinal
Ambassador of the Dominican Republic



Rene A. Leon
Ambassador of El Salvador



Francisco Villagrán
Ambassador of Guatemala



Roberto Flores Bermúdez
Ambassador of Honduras

Alan García
Presidente de la República del Perú

Lima, April 25, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid

Majority Leader

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20151

Dear Senator,

I have the honor to address Your Excellency concerning the Free Trade Agreement signed between the United States of America and Colombia, which is pending ratification by the US Congress. I am aware that this process has been delayed because of an understandable and special juncture.

Notwithstanding, allow me to ponder about the importance for the whole region that a country like Colombia, deeply committed with the strengthening of its democratic institutions and waging a head-on fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, can depend on an instrument that is key to the economic and social development of its people.

Alan García
Presidente de la República del Perú

This treaty will permit the consolidation of a model of development in the region that places representative democracy, economic freedom, free trade, and the unrestricted respect for individual freedoms and human rights above other views that promote development models that have proved to be inefficient in the past.

In this regard, the support of the United States is fundamental to empower the position of those countries that share the same values and a common vision for our development. Only the full participation of Colombia in a mechanism of this kind can effectively help us confront the challenges that we face and will consolidate an alliance between the United States and the region.

Consequently, I trust that the United States will respond to these historical challenges that not only will benefit Colombia but the whole region.

Remembering your kind visit to Peru, my wife and I would like to send you our warmest regards.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan García', written in a cursive style.

Alan García Pérez

President of the Republic of Peru

Congreso de Colombia

Bogotá D.C., abril 15 de 2008

Señora

NANCY PELOSI

Presidenta Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos
Washington D.C.

Señora Presidenta:

La decisión de la Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos de congelar la aprobación del Tratado de Libre Comercio con Colombia, constituye un golpe a la economía de nuestro país y, al mismo tiempo, nos da un trato de colonia que no se corresponde con un aliado de primer orden.

La posición del Partido Demócrata de involucrar a Colombia en un proceso electoral interno es injusta, porque las políticas de Estado deben estar por encima de consideraciones partidistas.

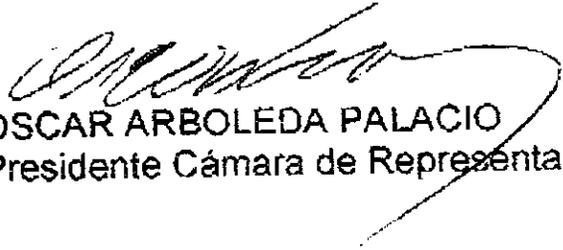
El argumento de que la firma del TLC pone en riesgo a líderes sindicales y trabajadores sindicalizados es aún más grave porque Colombia, en el marco de la **Política de Seguridad Democrática**, ha hecho grandes esfuerzos por impedir que crímenes de tal naturaleza se produzcan. Las cifras hablan por sí solas. Mientras en 2002 se registraron 196 homicidios contra trabajadores sindicalizados. Para 2007 la cifra bajó a 26. La meta es acabar con ese flagelo y lograr una Nación próspera, en paz y desarrollo con justicia social.

Congreso de Colombia

Para alcanzar esas metas, generar empleo lícito y fortalecer nuestra economía, Señora Presidenta, requerimos del apoyo y la cooperación decidida de nuestro mayor socio comercial. La historia reciente de Colombia es dolorosa porque cientos de colombianos han sacrificado sus vidas en la guerra contra el terrorismo y el narcotráfico, estimulados desde naciones consumidoras.

En estos momentos, Colombia necesita de su invaluable colaboración en el trámite del Tratado de Libre Comercio con Estados Unidos.

Cordial saludo,



OSCAR ARBOLEDA PALACIO
Presidente Cámara de Representantes de Colombia

NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Congress of Colombia

Ms. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Bogotá, April 15, 2008

Madam Speaker:

The decision of the United States House of Representatives to stay approval of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia is a blow to the Colombian economy, and affords colonial treatment to us that is unbecoming one of the United States' staunchest allies.

The Democratic Party's decision to involve Colombia in an internal electoral process is unfair, as national policy should rightly be placed above partisan considerations.

The argument that signing the FTA puts union leaders and workers at risk is even more seriously erroneous, given that under the framework of the Democratic Security Policy, Colombia has made great efforts to prevent crimes of that nature from occurring. The numbers speak for themselves: while 196 union workers were murdered in 2002, only 26 such deaths occurred in 2007. Our goal is to put an end to this scourge and achieve a prosperous, peaceful, developed nation with social justice.

In order to reach those goals, generate legitimate employment, and strengthen our economy, Madam Speaker, we require the decisive support and cooperation of our largest trade partner. Colombia's recent history is painful because hundreds of Colombians have sacrificed their lives in the war on terrorism and drug trafficking, both of which are stoked by consumer nations.

At this time Colombia needs your invaluable cooperation in the process of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Oscar Arboleda Palacio, Speaker
House of Representatives of Colombia

Brussels, 5 February 2008
CAB24/PM/HH D/08/101

The Honourable
Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker,

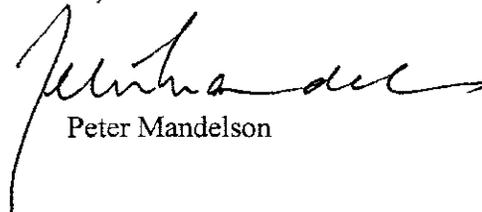
During my visit to Latin America last month I spent a few days in Colombia. I met representatives from business, civil society and the Government, and talked to President Alvaro Uribe. The main purpose of my trip was to pursue the negotiations on free trade between the European Union and the Andean Community including Colombia.

I am taking the liberty of sharing with you my assessment of the situation in the country. I found in President Uribe a single-minded and determined President, who is wholeheartedly committed to restoring the rule of law, the respect of human rights and prosperity to his country. Thanks in part to support from the United States I believe he is succeeding in breaking the cycle of drift and violence. He is well aware that he needs now to take the economy to a higher level by creating business and spreading employment opportunities amongst Colombians. Preferential trade agreements with the US and EU are central to that strategy.

I have followed the difficult considerations in Congress as you weigh the domestic situation in Colombia and discuss the merits of approving your Free Trade Agreement. This is a decision for Congress alone to take, and a narrow definition of the EU competing trade interests would even suggest Europe will gain if the deliberative process in Washington is delayed.

I am, however, sending you an expression of hope for a positive early decision on the US-Colombia FTA. I am doing this in the spirit of the transatlantic partnership and of our overriding shared objective of promoting stability, democracy and growth wherever we can in Latin America. I personally hope that Alvaro Uribe and his Government's ambitious project for Colombia may succeed.

Yours sincerely,


Peter Mandelson

c.c.: Senator Harry Reid



**Señora Nancy Pelosi
Presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes de los
Estados Unidos de América**

En los últimos veinte años, diversos países de América Latina han hecho notables avances en la construcción de democracias estables; la promoción del libre comercio y el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de sus habitantes. Los Estados Unidos de América han apoyado estos procesos utilizando, entre otros mecanismos, la suscripción, ratificación y ejecución de tratados de libre comercio. Así, México, Chile, los países centroamericanos y República Dominicana cuentan hoy con acuerdos de este tipo con su país. Estos esquemas, mutuamente benéficos, son valiosos instrumentos para el desarrollo.

Como es de su conocimiento, Colombia, Panamá y Perú también han suscrito tratados con Estados Unidos, pero éstos aún no han sido ratificados. Considero que la entrada en vigor de estos acuerdos sería del mayor beneficio, tanto para esos países, como para Estados Unidos y, en general, para las relaciones entre su país y América Latina. Asimismo, la ratificación de dichos tratados enviaría una señal importante del compromiso que todos tenemos con la integración comercial y con el desarrollo de nuestro continente. Por ello, respetuosamente la exhorto a hacer lo que esté a su alcance, dentro de sus atribuciones, para que así suceda.

Me valgo de esta oportunidad para enviarle un cordial saludo y para reiterarle la seguridad de mi distinguida consideración.

15 de octubre de 2007.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "FCM".

**Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
Presidente de los
Estados Unidos Mexicanos**

NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

UNITED MEXICAN STATES

Ms. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives of the
United States of America

Madam Speaker:

In the past 20 years, the countries of Latin America have made significant progress in building stable democracies, promoting free trade, and improving the quality of life of their citizens. The United States of America has supported these processes through, among other mechanisms, the signature, ratification, and implementation of free trade agreements. Mexico, Chile, the countries of Central America, and the Dominican Republic are now among those that have concluded this type of agreement with your country. These instruments are mutually beneficially and a valuable tool for development.

As you know, Colombia, Panama, and Peru have also signed agreements with the United States, but these have yet to be ratified. I believe that the entry into force of these agreements would be of the greatest benefit not only to those countries but also to the United States and, in general, to relations between your country and Latin America. Moreover, the ratification of the agreements would send an important signal of the commitment that we all share with respect to commercial integration and the development of our hemisphere. I respectfully urge you, therefore, to do everything in your power to ensure that this occurs.

I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of my cordial regards and to reiterate to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

October 15, 2007
[Signature]

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
President of the United Mexican States

Oscar Arias Sánchez

Presidente de la República

San José, 10 de octubre de 2007

Señora
Nancy Pelosi
Presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes
de los Estados Unidos de América
Washington, D.C.

Estimada señora:

Reciba un saludo cordial y las seguridades de mi alta y distinguida consideración, hacia usted y hacia la labor que desempeña en una de las instancias más democráticas del mundo: la Cámara de Representantes de los Estados Unidos de América.

Desde la recuperación de las democracias en casi la totalidad de América Latina, los países de nuestra región hemos hecho un esfuerzo considerable por atacar las raíces de la pobreza, de la desigualdad social, de la falta de oportunidades, del mejoramiento de los servicios básicos, entre otros. En esta lucha nos impulsa, antes que nada, un sentido humanitario y de justicia social, pero también la conciencia de que los problemas que crónicamente ha arrastrado América Latina, siguen siendo las trampas para el resurgimiento del populismo, de las restricciones a las libertades y, en última instancia, del discurso autoritario.

Conocemos perfectamente que los países de América Latina no consolidarán completamente sus democracias, en el tanto no sean capaces de fortalecer la base de bienestar social y económico que debe sustentarlas. Es por ello que la tarea de mejorar la calidad de vida de nuestros habitantes es, sin duda alguna, nuestra más perentoria tarea.

Los esfuerzos que hemos realizado en este sentido han sido acompañados, sin duda alguna, por el apoyo de los Estados Unidos, un país al que consideramos nuestro amigo, más que nuestro vecino o nuestro aliado.

Sin embargo, la amistad que entrelaza a los Estados Unidos con América Latina no puede basarse exclusivamente en la cooperación internacional, por importante que ésta sea. En muchos aspectos, los países latinoamericanos no pedimos de Estados Unidos caridad, sino tan sólo oportunidades y trato igualitario. Este es el caso de los Tratados de Libre Comercio que, a lo largo de la última década, se han venido firmando entre Estados Unidos y los países latinoamericanos, como México, Chile, los países centroamericanos y la República Dominicana.

Para las naciones latinoamericanas, los Tratados de Libre Comercio son una poderosa herramienta de combate a la pobreza y de generación de oportunidades. Chile, la economía más abierta de América Latina y que cuenta con Tratados de Libre Comercio con muchos países del mundo, ha logrado reducir la pobreza a casi una tercera parte en los últimos 17 años. Este es un ejemplo que muchos desean seguir, pues entre menos bienes exporten los países latinoamericanos, más se exponen al riesgo de exportar personas, a través de la migración masiva hacia los países desarrollados.

Costa Rica ha sabido comprenderlo muy bien, y esta es la razón por la cual el pasado 7 de octubre hemos ratificado, en el primer referéndum de nuestra historia, el Tratado de Libre Comercio que en el año 2004 firmamos con los Estados Unidos. Otras naciones latinoamericanas, sin embargo, a pesar de haber logrado negociar y firmar un Tratado de Libre Comercio como el nuestro, no han logrado aún su ratificación por parte de los Estados Unidos. Tal es el caso de Panamá, Perú y Colombia, los cuales negociaron sus acuerdos comerciales antes del vencimiento de las facultades especiales presidenciales conocidas como *fast track*, y hoy esperan la aprobación de los Tratados en el seno de una Cámara de Representantes con mayoría demócrata.

Con humildad y profundo respeto, quisiera sugerir la importancia de la ratificación de estos acuerdos por parte del Congreso de los Estados Unidos, pensando no sólo en el beneficio de las naciones latinoamericanas mencionadas, beneficio que sería considerable, sino también en el beneficio de los estadounidenses, que pueden derivar importantes consecuencias en términos de consumo y expansión de mercados.

Latinoamérica y Estados Unidos están indefectiblemente unidos en razón de territorio y vecindad. Desde hace muchos años, también el intercambio de bienes y servicios que se realiza a través de las fronteras, es un factor cardinal en el mantenimiento de una relación que es inevitable y de la cual tanto unos como otros podemos sacar un gran provecho. La aprobación de los Tratados de Libre Comercio de Estados Unidos con Panamá, Colombia y Perú sería un paso más en la profundización de esa relación, un paso más hacia una integración justa y equitativa entre nuestras naciones.

Sin otro particular y reiterándole mis buenos deseos,

Oscar Arias



NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Oscar Arias Sánchez
President of the Republic of Costa Rica

San José, October 10, 2007

Ms. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

Madam Speaker:

I salute the work that you are undertaking the United States House of Representatives, one of the world's most democratic bodies.

Since the restoration of democracy in almost all of Latin America, the countries of our region have made a considerable effort to fight poverty, social inequality, and the lack of opportunities, and to improve basic services, among other efforts. We are inspired in this struggle more than anything by a humanitarian sense of social justice, but also by an awareness that the problems that have chronically plagued Latin America continue to be springboards for a resurgence of populism, limits on freedoms, and ultimately, authoritarianism.

We are fully aware of the fact that the Latin American countries will not fully consolidate their democracies so long as they are not able to strengthen the foundation of the social and economic well-being that needs to sustain them. Thus, the job of improving the quality of life of our citizens is beyond any doubt our most imperative task.

The efforts that we have undertaken in this regard have clearly been sustained by the support of the United States, a country that we consider to be our friend, more than just our neighbor or our ally.

Yet the friendship that binds the United States and Latin America together cannot be based exclusively on international cooperation, however important that may be. In many regards, the countries of Latin America do not seek charity from the United States, but rather opportunities and equal treatment. This is true as well with respect to the free trade agreements which such Latin American countries as Mexico, Chile, the Central America countries, and the Dominican Republic have signed with the United States over the past ten years.

For the Latin American nations, the free trade agreements are a powerful tool for fighting poverty and for generating opportunities. Chile, the most open economy in Latin America, already has a free trade agreement with many of the world's countries and has managed to reduce its poverty by almost one-third in the past 17 years. This is an example that many wish to follow, since the fewer goods exported by the Latin American countries, the greater the risk they run of exporting persons through massive migration to the developed countries.

This is something that Costa Rica has understood very well, which is why this past October 7, we ratified, in the first referendum in our country's history, the Free Trade Agreement that we signed with the United States in 2004. Other Latin American countries, however, while negotiating and signing a Free Trade Agreement like ours, have still not had their agreements ratified by the United States. Such countries include Panama, Peru, and Colombia, which negotiated their trade agreements prior to the expiration of the special presidential "fast track"

NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

authority, and today await approval of their agreements by a House of Representatives with a democratic majority.

With humility and profound respect, I wish to underscore the importance of Congressional ratification of these Agreements, for I believe that they will not only benefit considerably the Latin American nations in question, but also the United States, which will be able to derive significant advantages in terms of commercial consumption and market expansion.

Latin America and the United States are inescapably linked by reason of territory and proximity. For many years, the exchange of goods and services across our borders has been a key factor in maintaining this ineluctable relationship from which we can all derive great advantage. Approval of the Free Trade Agreements with Panama, Colombia, and Peru would be a great step forward in the enhancement of this relationship, a step towards achieving fair and equitable commercial integration among our countries.

With my best regards,

[s] Oscar Arias
[Presidential stamp]

Managua, 3 de octubre de 2007

Apreciada Señora Presidenta:

En los últimos veinte años, países de América Latina han hecho notables avances en el propósito de construir democracias estables, promover el libre comercio y mejorar la calidad de vida de sus habitantes. En esos propósitos se han encontrado con no pocos obstáculos, que las más de las veces han sido superados con esfuerzo e imaginación.

Estados Unidos ha jugado un papel importante en la apertura de mercados, suscribiendo, ratificando y ejecutando tratados de libre comercio. México, Chile, los países centroamericanos y República Dominicana cuentan hoy con ese valioso instrumento de desarrollo que es el tratado de libre comercio con Estados Unidos. Otros países han suscrito tratados, pero éstos no han sido ratificados aún. Ello es lo que motiva esta misiva.

Colombia, Panamá y Perú, antes del vencimiento de las facultades especiales conocidas como *fast track*, firmaron sendos tratados de Libre Comercio con Estados Unidos. Nosotros consideramos que sería del mayor beneficio para esos países, para Estados Unidos y en general, para las relaciones entre su país y América Latina, que dichos tratados fueran ratificados. Los procesos de ratificación de los tratados de libre comercio encuentran obstáculos producto de la incompreensión, a pesar de lo cual todos los países con los cuales se han suscrito han completado, o están próximos a completar, sus respectivos procedimientos constitucionales.

Estamos seguros de que al Congreso de Estados Unidos le anima el deseo de ratificar los convenios. De hacerlo, enviaría una señal importante del compromiso que todos tenemos con la integración comercial de nuestro continente. Es por esa razón que nos permitimos encarecerle que haga lo que

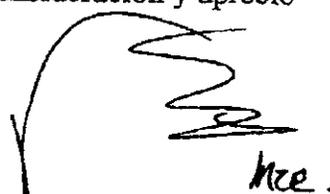
.....esté a su

esté a su alcance dentro de sus atribuciones para que, Colombia, Panama y Perú puedan gozar pronto de los beneficios de un tratado de Libre Comercio con Estados Unidos en plena vigencia.

Al agradecer su atención a la presente nota, aprovechamos la ocasión para reiterarle las muestras de nuestra mayor consideración y aprecio

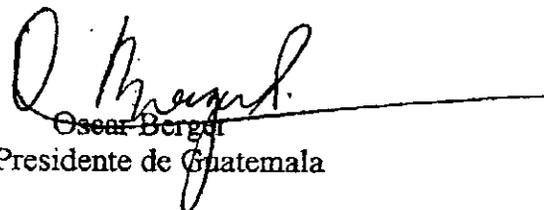


Elías Antonio Saca
Presidente de El Salvador



Manuel Zelaya
Presidente de Honduras

Daniel Ortega Saavedra
Presidente de Nicaragua



Oscar Berger
Presidente de Guatemala

Señora Nancy Pelosi
Presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes
de los Estados Unidos de América
Washington, D.C.

NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Managua, October 3, 2007

Madam Speaker:

In the past 20 years, the countries of Latin America have made significant progress in building stable democracies, promoting free trade, and improving the quality of life of their citizens. In their efforts to achieve these goals, they have encountered numerous obstacles that they have most always overcome with effort and imagination.

The United States has played an important role in opening our markets, signing, approving, and implementing free trade agreements. Mexico, Chile, the countries of Central America, and the Dominican Republic are now among those that have concluded this valuable instrument, the Free Trade Agreement, with the United States. Other countries have signed agreements, but they have not yet been ratified, which is the reason behind this letter.

Prior to the expiration of the special "fast track" authority, Colombia, Panama, and Peru each signed free trade agreements with the United States. We believe that it would be of great benefit to those countries, to the United States and, in general, to relations between your country and Latin America, if those agreements were ratified. The free trade agreement ratification process has encountered obstacles born of a lack of understanding, despite the fact that all the countries that have signed these agreements have completed, or are close to completing, their respective constitutional procedures.

We are certain that the United States Congress wishes to ratify the agreements. By doing so, it would send an important signal reflecting the commitment that we all have in the commercial integration of our hemisphere. We entreat you, therefore to do everything in your power to ensure that Colombia, Panama, and Peru will soon be able to enjoy the benefits of a fully effective Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and ask you to accept, Madam Speaker, the assurances of our highest consideration and esteem.

[Signature]
Elías Antonio Saca
President of El Salvador

[Signature]
Manual Zelaya
President of Honduras

Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President of Nicaragua

[Signatura]
Oscar Berger
President of Guatemala

Ms. Nancy Pelosi,
Speaker of the House of Representatives
of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.



PM addresses the Council on Foreign Relations

25 September 2007
New York

Thank you.

Let me say at the outset how delighted I am to have this opportunity to address the Council on Foreign Relations.

There is no better forum, no organization more respected or influential than the Council when the subject matter is the intricate, complex world of foreign policy.

.....

Our new government has committed Canada to active and sustained re-engagement with the hemisphere to advance security, prosperity and democracy.

I visited the region this summer. The contrasts were stark and worrisome.

While many nations are pursuing market reform and democratic development, others are falling back to economic nationalism and protectionism, to political populism and authoritarianism.

Democracy, economic prosperity and social equality are still a work in progress in the region.

.....

On my hemispheric tour I also went to Colombia where our government is undertaking free-trade negotiations.

This is in Canada's own strategic trade interests.

But it will also assist that country to continue on its path of overcoming a long, dark history of terror and violence and moving its people to a future of economic and democratic development.

In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America.

I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?

There is a lot of worry in this country about the ideology of populism, nationalism and protectionism in the Americas, and the governments that promote it.

But, frankly, my friends, there is nowhere in the hemisphere that those forces can do more real damage than those forces in the United States itself.

And, if the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could ever hope to achieve.

I say this because I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to defend our shared interests and values at home as well as abroad – and more open trade in the hemisphere is consistent with our values and in all of our interests.

Let me take NAFTA.

Now I know NAFTA has become somewhat of a whipping boy to some in the United States, just as it is to some in Mexico and even to some in Canada.

But the fact is that NAFTA has been unequivocally good for all of our countries.

In spite of the naysayers and the doomsdayers, I could recite a litany of economic statistics to demonstrate its success – which is why virtually nobody, not even the critics, dares suggest to rip it up.

But more importantly, look south of your border.

Today, Mexico's economy is not only growing, but it now has genuine, democratic elections and peaceful transfers of political power.

And it is engaging with the United States and Canada on security matters.

All of these things were unthinkable before NAFTA was signed.

I could go farther south, to Chile – a country with which Canada signed a trade agreement exactly ten years ago

Today Chile is so stable and prosperous that, after years of turmoil, violence and dictatorship, it is now a member of the OECD

....

Thank you.

Source: Office of the Prime Minister



Santiago de Chile, 23 de Abril, 2007.

Honorable Representante
Señora Nancy Pelosi
US Chamber of Representatives
Capitol Hill
Washington D.C.

Honorable señora Líder de la Mayoría:

Con gran alegría la he visto convertirse en la primera mujer Líder de la Mayoría en la historia del Congreso de los Estados Unidos. Una vez más la felicito sinceramente y le deseo el mejor de los éxitos.

En esta oportunidad tengo el agrado de dirigirme a usted con el fin de compartir algunas ideas sobre la realidad económica y social que enfrentan las poblaciones de varios países latinoamericanos y, en particular, los menos desarrollados.

Considero que la positiva realidad que ha creado el Tratado de Libre Comercio entre Chile y los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica puede constituir un elemento útil cuando el Congreso de su país deba pronunciarse sobre la aprobación de los Tratados de Libre Comercio entre los Estados Unidos y Perú, Panamá y Colombia.

Transcurridos más de tres años desde la entrada en vigencia de nuestro acuerdo comercial bilateral, la evaluación de sus efectos tanto por parte de mi gobierno como de la opinión pública chilena es claramente positiva. El comercio entre nuestros países ha crecido en un 130% en los últimos tres años. Este vigoroso crecimiento del comercio bilateral ha contribuido a generar más y mejores empleos en Chile y también a que nuevas empresas - en su mayoría medianas y pequeñas -, se incorporen por primera vez al proceso exportador.

Asimismo, el Acuerdo de Libre Comercio con los Estados Unidos -junto a los que Chile ha firmado con otros países y regiones del mundo-, ha sido un factor fundamental para reducir nuestros índices de pobreza y mejorar nuestra capacidad productiva y tecnológica. Estamos convencidos que el libre comercio es un poderoso motor de crecimiento y progreso, aspectos fundamentales para ampliar y profundizar la democracia y sus instituciones.



Deseo subrayar también que en materias tan importantes como la ambiental y laboral estamos trabajando en estrecha colaboración con las autoridades de su país en proyectos orientados a mejorar la calidad y fortalecer el cumplimiento de nuestras leyes y regulaciones, a fin de alcanzar estándares internacionales. Ello, a mi juicio, es indispensable para competir exitosamente en una economía cada vez más globalizada.

Como usted conoce, varios países latinoamericanos cuentan con nuevos gobernantes, todos ellos elegidos de manera democrática. Sin embargo, un importante número de sus ciudadanos viven en condiciones de pobreza extrema, sin acceso a la salud y la educación, como tampoco acceden a una alimentación adecuada ni a trabajos dignos. Muchas de las familias latinoamericanas están encabezadas por mujeres, las cuales sufren discriminación o carecen de conocimiento o capacidades mínimas para obtener un trabajo que les permita sacar a sus hijos del círculo vicioso de la pobreza y falta de oportunidades.

Por estas razones, estoy segura que las respectivas aprobaciones por el Congreso de su país, de los Tratados de Libre Comercio entre los Estados Unidos y Perú, Panamá y Colombia, junto a las prórrogas de las preferencias arancelarias para Bolivia y Ecuador, recientemente aprobadas, beneficiarán tanto a éstos países como a todo el continente americano, cuya aspiración común es avanzar por la senda del desarrollo económico y social en paz, libertad y democracia. Estas aprobaciones también serán de beneficio para la relación de los Estados Unidos con la América Latina, puesto que estimularán el comercio y los intercambios, así como las relaciones económicas y políticas globales.

Junto con saludarla muy atentamente, hago propicia esta ocasión para manifestarle las seguridades de mi más alta y distinguida consideración.

Michelle Bachelet Jeria

NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Santiago de Chile, April 23, 2007

The Honorable
Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Madame Speaker:

It is with great joy that I again congratulate you for having been appointed as the first female Speaker in the history of the U.S. Congress, and I wish you great success in your tenure.

On this occasion, I am pleased to write you in order to share with you some ideas on the economic and social reality that the populations of many Latin American countries face, particularly the less developed ones.

I believe that the positive reality generated by the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Chile, might constitute a useful element for the Congress of your country when the moment comes to decide on the approval of the Free Trade Agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia.

Three years after our bilateral trade agreement came into force, the evaluation of its effects made by my Government, as well as the one of the Chilean public opinion, is clearly positive. During the abovementioned period, trade between our countries has increased 130%. This vigorous growth of our bilateral trade not only has contributed to create more and better sources of employment in Chile, but has also allowed new enterprises –most of them small and mid size- to join the export process for the first time.

Furthermore, our Free Trade Agreement, together with the ones Chile has signed with countries in other regions of the world, has been a paramount factor in reducing our poverty indexes, as well as in improving our technological and productive capacities. We are convinced that free trade is a powerful engine for growth and progress, both fundamental issues that lead to broaden and deepen democracy and its institutions.

I would also like to emphasize that regarding environmental and labor issues, we are closely working with the authorities of your country in projects oriented to improve the quality as well as to strengthen the enforcement of our laws

and regulations, in order to reach international standards. In my view, this is indispensable to successfully compete in an increasingly globalized economy.

As you know, many Latin American countries have new leaders, all of them democratically elected. However, an important number of their citizens live in conditions of extreme poverty, without access to health benefits and education, nor to an appropriate nutrition and dignified jobs. Many of the Latin American families are headed by women, who are subject to discrimination and do not possess the knowledge and the minimum skills to obtain a job which will allow them to pull their children out of the vicious circle of poverty and lack of opportunities.

For all the said reasons, I am certain that the respective approvals by the Congress of your country of the Free Trade Agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia, together with the extension of the recently approved tariff preferences for Bolivia and Ecuador, will benefit those countries as well as the rest of the American continent, whose common aspiration is to advance along the path of economic and social development in peace, freedom, and democracy. These approvals will also be beneficial for the relation existing between the United States and Latin America, since they will stimulate trade and exchanges, as well as the global economic and political relations.

Together with extending my most sincere greetings, I avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate to you the assurances of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

Michelle Bachelet Jeria



Dave Heineman
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. Box 94848 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4848
Phone: (402) 471-2244 • gov.heineman@gov.ne.gov

April 28, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
235 Cannon House Office Bldg
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker:

We are writing to respectfully request that you use your position as Speaker of the House of Representatives to bring forward, for immediate action, the Colombia and South Korea Free Trade Agreements with the United States. We believe these agreements, if approved, will be very beneficial to Nebraska's agriculture industry, particularly our livestock sector, which is struggling financially at present.

In Nebraska, the livestock sector annually accounts for about two-thirds of all agricultural cash receipts. However, our farmers and ranchers are enduring very difficult profitability challenges. In fact, pork producers are currently losing as much as \$60 per head, and cattle feeders are losing up to \$200 to \$300 per head. The Free Trade Agreements with both Colombia and South Korea hold great opportunity for Nebraska, and American livestock producers in general, to increase demand for our quality meat exports and decrease our per head losses.

The importance of foreign trade to Nebraska and U.S. agriculture cannot be overstated. The Colombian FTA represents an additional \$690 million in gains to America's farmers and ranchers, including \$10-\$20 million to the beef industry and \$160 million to the pork industry. The South Korea FTA is much larger, representing \$1 billion to each of our two largest livestock sectors.

Nebraska farmers and ranchers are negatively impacted when they are not allowed to offer their products competitively in the world's grocery stores. Again, we respectfully request that you bring the Colombia and South Korea Free Trade Agreements before the House of Representatives for a vote. Thank you for your immediate consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Heineman".

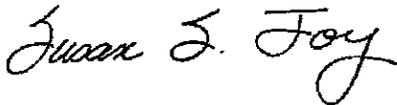
Dave Heineman
Governor



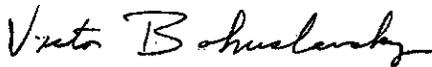
Senator Philip Erdman
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
Nebraska Legislature



Nebraska Cattlemen



Nebraska Poultry Industries



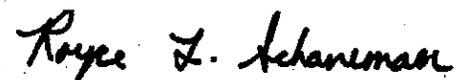
Nebraska Soybean Board



Nebraska Corn Growers



Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board



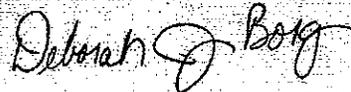
Nebraska Wheat Growers
Nebraska Wheat Board



Nebraska Pork Producers



Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation



Nebraska Soybean Association



Nebraska Corn Board



Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers

**MAYORS IN SUPPORT OF THE U.S. COLOMBIA TRADE
PROMOTION AGREEMENT**

April 11, 2008

**The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
The U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C.**

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We are very appreciative of your leadership and commitment to improving our Nation's competitive position in the world economy. As mayors, we are directly engaged in building our local economies and expanding our jobs base. The more that our businesses, both small and large, and our local entrepreneurs can engage in international trade, the better, as we see such trade as key to further economic growth.

It is because of this that we write, as Democrats and Republicans, to express strong bi-partisan support for the pending U.S. Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. We do so for several major reasons:

- (1) Presently, Colombian goods enter the U.S. market essentially without tariffs while U.S. goods, entering Colombia, are subject to tariffs, creating an uneven trade relationship and a barrier to equitable treatment of U.S. exports. This Agreement eliminates the tariffs on U.S. goods and thus a fair and balanced trade relationship would result. This will help U.S. agricultural, manufacturing and other sectors.**
- (2) Nearly 40% of U.S. economic growth has been associated with this Nation's export activities. Of the 14 countries with Free Trade Agreements with the U.S., Colombia already receives a very measurable percentage of the U.S. exports under these Agreements and there is therefore every reason to believe the trade of U.S. goods to Colombia will increase because they will be cheaper in the Colombian market under this Agreement. That means more jobs in the U.S.**

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
April 11, 2008

Page Two

- (3) This Agreement further stabilizes a country now showing great progress from when its economy was once based on narco-trade and punctuated by serious violence. A more stable Colombia is in this Nation's interests. Moreover, we think it is strategically important for the U.S. to further build stronger relationships with key countries in South America to counter-balance and isolate the anti-American efforts of Venezuela's leadership.
- (4) If we walk away from this and similar Agreements, we are ceding the Western Hemisphere to our competitors who unhesitatingly would pursue and are seeking greater market share in the countries both close to the U.S. and elsewhere. That is not in our interests. It is of concern to us that there are presently as many as one hundred other Trade Agreements being negotiated worldwide that do not include the U.S. We need to maintain a very competitive advantage, especially in our own hemisphere.

We are grateful for your consideration of these views and hope you will schedule the U.S. Colombia Trade Agreement for House action and that it will be fully approved.

With warmest regards, we are

Yours Sincerely



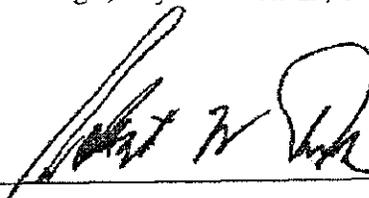
Stephen R. Reed, Mayor of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



Curt Pringle, Mayor of Anaheim, California



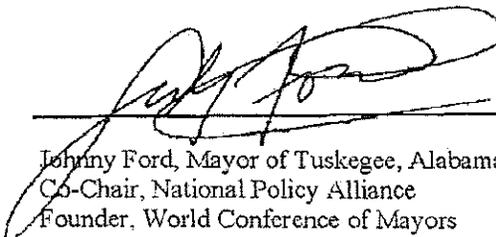
Tom Leppert, Mayor of Dallas, Texas



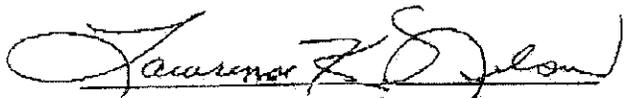
Robert N. Cluck, M.D., Mayor of Arlington, Texas



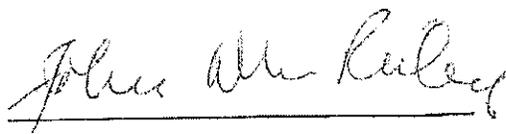
Heidi Davidson, Mayor of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia



Johnny Ford, Mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama
Co-Chair, National Policy Alliance
Founder, World Conference of Mayors



Lawrence K. Nelson, Mayor of Yuma, Arizona



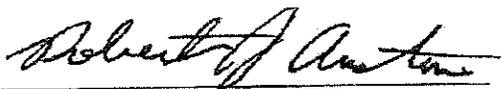
John D. W. Recley, Mayor of Pottsville, Pennsylvania



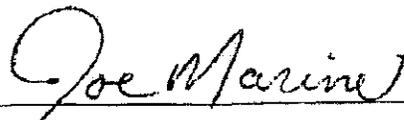
Dr. Perry R. McNeill, P.E., Mayor of Denton, Texas



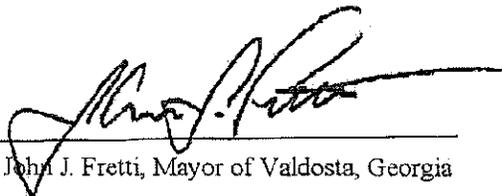
Timothy J. Davlin, Mayor of Springfield, Illinois



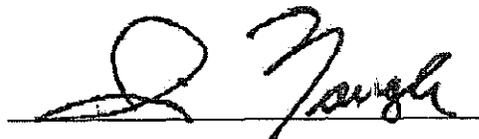
Robert J. Austin, Mayor Estacada, Oregon



Joe Marine, Mayor of Mukilteo, Washington



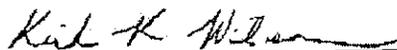
John J. Fretti, Mayor of Valdosta, Georgia



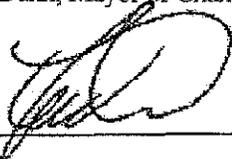
Jim Naugle, Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, Florida



Boyd W. Dunn, Mayor of Chandler, Arizona



Kirk R. Wilson, Mayor of Carlisle, Pennsylvania



Lou Ogden, Mayor of Tualatin, Oregon



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

March 25, 2008

The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez,

On behalf of the State of Georgia, I offer my support for the free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and the Republic of South Korea. I believe these negotiations will act as an effective means of promoting trade opportunities both in Georgia and abroad.

Georgia is home to 55 Consulates (Career and Honorary), 15 trade offices and 23 Bi-National Chambers; therefore, I believe great opportunity lies ahead for our state and others by promoting these free trade agreements. As you may know, Georgia already trades with Colombia, Panama and the Republic of South Korea. In fact, Georgia currently conducts approximately \$4 billion a year in business with South Korea alone. These figures would surely increase were such trade covenants approved. As such, I encourage you to continue to work with Congress on favorable passage of these important trade alliances.

Thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of this important issue. I will continue to work with Georgia's Congressional delegation in support of these agreements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonny Perdue".

Sonny Perdue
Governor



**Office of the Mayor
The City of Harrisburg**

M.L.K. City Government Center
10 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1678

Stephen R. Reed
Mayor

January 7, 2008

(717) 255-3040

Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Member, United States Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

The United States Congress will very soon be taking up the matter of the United States-Columbia Trade Promotion Agreement. We take this opportunity to express our endorsement and support of the same.

Of the four different Trade Agreements currently going through the approval process, with the Agreement with Peru having been approved by Congress in December, this would be the largest of these three Trade Agreements. The United States has a sixteen billion dollar trade relationship with Columbia.

Most of the goods being imported into the United States from Columbia come to this nation without any tariffs being imposed. This is not the case, however, with regard to most goods being exported by the United States to Columbia.

One of the principle effects of the proposed new Trade Agreement with Columbia would be to remove these tariffs on U.S. goods, along with the removal of certain trade barriers affecting U.S. generated products.

The primary beneficiaries of the proposed Free Trade Agreement with Columbia would be the agricultural, manufacturing and service industries of our nation. All three have a major presence in Pennsylvania, of course.

It is particularly useful for stronger economic relationships to evolve with Columbia, not only because it will benefit the United States economy but because it will further allow the evolution of Columbia's economy away from what was once an economy dominated by illegal

Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Page 2

January 7, 2008

narcotics. Moreover, given the extent of our competition with other major trading countries in the world, it is certain that should the United States not act to improve its own free trade relationship with Columbia, there are certainly other competitors who will want to take advantage of such for their own gain and at our loss.

With the further advances in the economic productivity and strength of the Asian Pacific Rim countries, it is also important to have the United States lead the further advancement and growth of the economy in the Western Hemisphere. In doing so, we advance the United States not only in economic terms but in other ways, as well. Candidly, having other countries on other continents gaining greater economic footholds in the Western Hemisphere is not in our nation's best interests.

For these and related reasons, we think that the United States-Columbia Trade Promotion Agreement should be adopted and appreciate your consideration of this view.

With warmest personal regards, I am

Yours sincerely,



Stephen R. Reed
Mayor

SRR/dk



STATE OF UTAH

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
84114-2220

JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR.
GOVERNOR

GARY R. HERBERT
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 17, 2007

The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez,

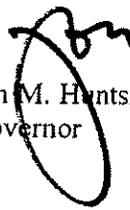
You are to be commended for your tireless efforts to promote the recent free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, Peru, and The Republic of Korea. I strongly support these agreements as an effective means to increase opportunities for U.S. businesses in these regions.

Utah's economic success in recent years has resulted in part from our strategy to capitalize on global opportunities for Utah's small to mid-sized firms. We have seen significant growth from other Federal Trade Agreements (FTA). Since the U.S-Singapore agreement went into effect in 2004, Utah's exports to Singapore have risen 48 percent, and Utah's exports to Australia have risen by 62 percent since the U.S.-Australia FTA entered into force in 2005. Utah exports more than \$145 million to Columbia, Panama, Peru, and Korea. We expect these numbers to rise significantly as each FTA is entered into force.

Of the four countries previously mentioned, Utah's most substantial trading partner is The Republic of Korea. The U.S.-Korea FTA eliminates tariffs and other barriers that will affect many of our most significant industries, particularly IT, life sciences, and chemical manufacturing. The free trade agreement will undoubtedly generate greater exports by rectifying the tariff imbalances that currently favor foreign exporters.

I have directed members of my staff to collaborate with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Trade Representative in support of these agreements. I plan to work with Utah's congressional delegation and the World Trade Center Utah to see that these agreements bring maximum benefit to Utah's companies. Again, thank you for your diligence and dedication in making these FTAs a reality.

Sincerely,


Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.
Governor

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
C. RAY NAGIN, MAYOR



November 8, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
235 Canon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

As Mayor and on behalf of the City of New Orleans, I wish to thank you for your support of the free trade agreement (FTA) with Peru, and congratulate you on its passage. I also respectfully urge you to continue to support free trade by promoting future agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. Each of the future FTAs would provide unique opportunities for the City of New Orleans to increase international economic development.

Three of these countries were top ten locations for exports from Louisiana in 2006, totaling \$1.4 billion. Lowered or eliminated importation barriers to our petroleum and coal products and chemical manufactures, which account, on average, for 46% of our exports to these states will greatly benefit our economy and the nation as our exports also include goods manufactured around the country.

Corn and soybeans are the number one and two exports from Louisiana's ports, with Colombia and South Korea in the top five recipients of these products. The pending FTAs in Congress will eliminate 77% of agricultural tariffs immediately in Colombia and 66% in South Korea, greatly increasing trade in this area. We also export \$212 million in oil to Panama. Again, the FTA will initially significantly eliminate a variety of tariffs, with the effect of greatly increasing exports in oil and other petroleum products to Panama and other countries.

New Orleans is becoming an even greater international city in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and we are making every effort to capitalize on the trade liberalization that will flow from these FTAs. Our port system is ideally situated to take advantage of the Latin American FTAs and we plan to seek out bilateral investment opportunities with our FTA partners. As the largest tonnage port in the United States, we specialize in the transport of bulk materials such as grain, crude oil, and petrochemicals, all of which are subject to tariff elimination by these FTAs. The South Louisiana Ports account for 50% of grain exports for the entire country, making agreements which lower tariffs on agricultural products crucial to the nation's economy as well as New Orleans and Louisiana's local economies.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

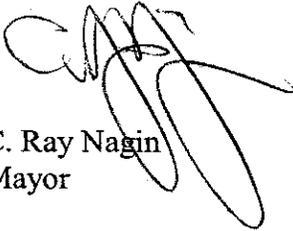
November 8, 2007

Page 2

We are already hard at work securing the economic advantages available under the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement and look forward to continuing our efforts with new FTA partners.

Thank you in advance for your consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Nagin', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

C. Ray Nagin
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Rodney Alexander
The Honorable Richard Baker
The Honorable Charles Boustany
The Honorable William Jefferson
The Honorable Bobby Jindal
The Honorable Jim McCrery
The Honorable Charles Melancon



CITY OF ATLANTA

SHIRLEY FRANKLIN
MAYOR

55 TRINITY AVENUE, S.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-0300
TEL (404) 330-8100

October 12, 2007

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the citizens of Atlanta, I am pleased to write this letter of support for free trade agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Korea, Panama and Peru.

I am aware that the Senate Finance Committee has approved legislation to implement the Peru Free Trade Agreement, and that passage of such legislation by the Ways and Means Committee is pending. I am also aware that the leadership of both houses has been seeking recognition by these countries of important labor and environmental standards, and open markets for certain U.S. exports.

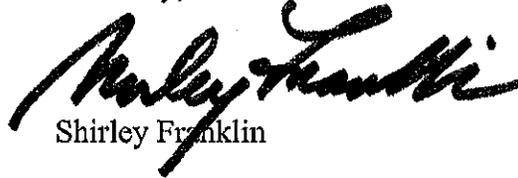
With the improvements being sought in these FTAs, I am hopeful that they will more effectively and more fairly facilitate trade on a multilateral, regional and bilateral basis and will lower tariffs and foster increased trade between the relevant countries by removing barriers to goods and services and permit the better movement of capital, technology and resources. This represents a win-win scenario for all parties concerned.

For the record, I want to convey the positive impact FTAs could have on the state of Georgia, as our economy depends heavily on exports. For instance, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Georgia's export shipments of merchandise in 2006 totaled \$20.0 billion. Georgia ranked 16th among the 50 states in terms of 2006 export value. Georgia increased its merchandise exports \$5.7 billion (39 percent) from 2002 to 2006. Export-supported jobs linked to manufacturing accounted for an estimated 4.2 percent of Georgia's total private-sector employment. Nearly one-seventh (13.3 percent) of all manufacturing workers in Georgia depend on exports for their jobs. Additionally, to highlight the positive effect of these FTAs, in the first three years of the U.S.-Singapore FTA (2004-2006), Georgia's exports to Singapore have grown 153 percent. Since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entered into force in 1994, Georgia's combined exports to Canada and Mexico have increased by 223 percent.

Atlanta is a city growing in global caliber and stature and we benefit greatly from the daily contributions of more than 32,000 nationals of Colombia, Korea, Panama and Peru living in the metropolitan area. The opportunity to provide fair and open trade policies with these countries should be utilized as such policies help to maintain good relationships and boost economies through job creation, greater market access and improved competitiveness.

I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley Franklin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S".

Shirley Franklin



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

October 5, 2007

The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

On behalf of the State of Florida, I offer my strong support of the trade promotion agreements with Peru, Panama, Colombia, and South Korea. Your exhaustive efforts advocating these agreements have been instrumental in building a strong coalition of support for the U.S.'s free trade agenda.

As the "Gateway of the Americas", Florida supports eliminating barriers to global commerce, while promoting beneficial trade policies not only in our hemisphere, but worldwide. Florida already has a substantial trade relationship with Peru, Panama, and Colombia, with combined two-way trade valued at over \$7 billion in 2006. Trade between Florida and these countries will undoubtedly grow after these agreements have been implemented and will strengthen our economic and cultural ties. Florida's business community, ninety-seven percent of which are small and medium sized enterprises, relies on trade promoting legislation to enter the global market place. Most importantly, these agreements help level the playing field and create a beneficial, reciprocal relationship with our partners in our hemisphere and beyond.

Given our shared goals of promoting global trade, I have instructed my office to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Trade Representative in supporting the passage of these agreements. I intend to work with Florida's congressional delegation and our international partners in Florida to see that these agreements become a reality.

Once again, thank you for your hard work and I look forward to working together to accomplish these agreements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist

CC/kf



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

September 26, 2007

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce
Mailstop 61
United States Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

Thank you for your letter regarding legislation to implement Free Trade Agreements with Peru, Panama, Columbia, and South Korea. Global commerce is vital to the economy of Virginia, and we stand in support of those means which further advance the economic prosperity of our Commonwealth.

Exports in 2006 from Virginia to Peru, Panama, and Columbia totaled over \$141 million, and South Korean exports were over \$214 million. Export figures are on track to exceed those amounts in 2007. Having responsible Free Trade Agreements in place will facilitate the ease with which Virginia companies are able to trade with these countries.

As Congress begins consideration of these agreements in the interest of advancing global trade, my Administration will participate in the discussion so that forthcoming Free Trade Agreements may continue to enhance Virginia's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim", written over a horizontal line.

Timothy M. Kaine

TMK/ub



Chandler • Arizona
Where Values Make The Difference

September 17, 2007

Boyd W. Dunn
Mayor

Office of the Mayor

Telephone
(480) 782-2200

Fax
(480) 782-2233

E-mail
boyd.dunn@chandleraz.gov

Mailing Address
Mail Stop 603
PO Box 4008
Chandler, Arizona 85244-4008

Location
Suite 301
55 North Arizona Place
Chandler, Arizona 85225

Ms. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As the Mayor of the City of Chandler, I am writing to request your support of the free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and Korea.

Chandler's economy, like many other cities, is becoming increasingly global. Many of the high-tech companies that have located here also have operations in other parts of the world. The continuing effort to remove trade barriers with these countries will open up new markets for some of our key corporate citizens. Their success in the global marketplace will certainly help assure the future sustainability of our community.

Although Chandler is no longer an agricultural community, farming continues to be a major sector of the State's economy. The Peru, Colombia, and Panama Free Trade Agreements will help bring new opportunities to Arizona's farmers and ranchers.

These trade agreements have the potential of creating significant economic benefits for Arizona and the rest of the United States. In addition, these agreements give us another means of strengthening freedom and democracy in other parts of the world, and in enhancing our security through improved geopolitical relationships.

I appreciate your consideration in the support of these measures.

Sincerely,

Boyd W. Dunn
Mayor



September 14, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
511 Senate Hart Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

As Mayors of the three largest cities in the North Texas metro area, we are jointly urging your support of the free trade agreements (FTA) with Columbia, Peru, Panama and Korea.

The North Texas economic engine is one of the strongest in the country. It is a \$300 Billion economy with the 5th largest gross product in the United States. We led the nation in job creation in the past few years, annually netting approximately 90,000 new jobs. Four of the country's top ten growth economies are here in Texas, and North Texas is the highest in total growth. And that growth is expected to continue through the end of this decade.

Our region is home to many multi-national firms and has become a major trade hub for the country. Removing barriers to commercial trade between our nation and other free economies will open vital new markets for companies here and boost the flow of goods and services through North Texas.

Free trade agreements provide new and significant economic opportunities with our foreign trade partners, which in turn strengthens our position in the world economy. It also encourages responsible labor, social and environmental policies with those partners as well.

We again urge passage of these free trade agreements. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tom Leppert in black ink.

Tom Leppert
Mayor of Dallas

Handwritten signature of Mike Moncrief in black ink.

Mike Moncrief
Mayor of Ft. Worth

Handwritten signature of Robert Cluck in black ink.

Robert Cluck
Mayor of Arlington

SENATOR DON BALFOUR

District 9
453 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 555-0095
Fax (404) 656-8581
Email: ss9balfour@aol.com



The State Senate
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

COMMITTEES:

Chairman, Rules Committee
Appropriations
Education and Youth
Health and Human Services

September 11, 2007

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
416 Russell SOB
Washington, DC 20510-1005

Dear Senator Chambliss,

I am writing in support of the free trade agreements with Peru, Columbia, Panama and Korea.

Georgia depends on world markets and these agreements will help to open vital new markets and remove barriers to goods and services exports between Georgia and these countries. Manufacturing, mining, construction and agricultural products are a few of the exports that now go to world wide countries. The free trade agreements that are before Congress will help to create an economic boom for businesses and provide jobs and a better quality of life for all Georgians.

I urge you to support the free trade agreements with Peru, Columbia, Panama and Korea.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Balfour".

Don Balfour
State Senator



The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY
MAYOR MICK CORNETT

September 11, 2007

The Honorable James Inhofe
U.S. Senate
453 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3603

Dear Senator Inhofe:

As proof of my consistent support for creating more jobs in Oklahoma City, I am writing in support of the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Peru, Colombia, and Panama. As the Mayor of Oklahoma's capital city, I appreciate the value of opening up vital new markets and advancing local opportunities for international commerce. These Free Trade Agreements will mean more economic activity and more jobs for Oklahoma.

As an example, in 2006, Oklahoma exported \$13.5 million in goods to Peru and \$36 million in goods to Colombia. These numbers will only grow once the Free Trade Agreements are in force.

Oklahoma City has truly become a world-class city, and Oklahoma is doing business internationally like never before. Given the potential for new and substantial economic opportunities, bilateral Free Trade Agreements with our foreign partners are the next logical step to strengthening our local economies. For these reasons, I urge you to support the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Peru, Colombia and Panama.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue, and thank you for all you are doing for Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mick Cornett".

Mick Cornett
Mayor

City of Miami, Florida

MANUEL A. DIAZ
MAYOR



3500 PAN AMERICAN DRIVE
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33133
(305) 250-5300
FAX (305) 854-4001

September 11, 2007

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
1630 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bilirakis:

I am writing urging your support of the free trade agreements (FTA) with Peru, Colombia, and Panama.

Supporting these agreements will remove barriers to goods and services exchanged between our countries, and will allow for the better movement of technology, innovation, and resources. It is of further benefit in that it allows citizens of the countries to more easily purchase American goods, while at the same time allowing our citizens to benefit from the goods and resources of these countries.

Our city has become the natural business capital for Latin America through its over 60% foreign born population and over 150 languages spoken daily. It is through free trade and openness to foreign markets that we have expanded our economy, created new jobs, and provided the opportunity for advancement to our residents. Ratification of these FTAs will provide a market of over 75 million consumers and \$575 million, allowing us to expand our nearly \$13 billion commercial investment in this area, a clear benefit to this city and our state as well.

I once again urge you to support passage of these FTAs and I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



JERRY SANDERS
MAYOR

September 5, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6200

Dear Chairman Baucus:

I write in support of the free trade agreements with Panama, Columbia, Peru and South Korea as currently proposed by the United States Trade Representative.

The proposed agreements provide significant benefits to the U.S. economy, including major industry and consumers located here in San Diego. These agreements provide improved access to large and growing markets in both Latin America and in South Korea by removing tariffs on U.S. exports and creating a "level playing field" including enforceable protections for U.S. investors and powerful and expedited dispute settlement mechanisms.

Additionally, San Diego is home to an active and growing maritime port which hosts one of the few on-dock cold storage facilities on the U.S. west coast and is the first port of entry on the west coast for reefer ships arriving from Latin America. This, combined with the chance for increased importing and exporting opportunities with South Korea, will benefit the San Diego region and its citizens should the trade agreements be adopted.

It is for these reasons that I urge your support of the proposed FTA with Panama, Columbia, Peru and South Korea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JS" or "Jerry Sanders".

JERRY SANDERS

JS/be

cc: Bill Beherns, Special Assistant to the President Office of Intergovernmental Affairs



Brad Cole, Mayor

200 South Illinois Avenue
Post Office Box 2047
Carbondale, Illinois 62902-2047
Telephone 618-457-3229
Fax 618-351-5766
bcole@ci.carbondale.il.us

August 29, 2007

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1304
Fax: 202-228-0400

Dear Senator Durbin:

I write to urge your support for the free trade agreements that involve Peru, Colombia, Panama and South Korea.

While there is often much discussion about the benefits of free trade, and perhaps specifically with these nations, it is obvious that free trade agreements allow for technology, various goods and agricultural products, ideas and other resources to be bought, sold or otherwise exchanged in a manner that is positive toward the United States.

These agreements deserve your support, to help open markets and advance open relationships around the world. Your consideration is appreciated.

Yours very truly,

MAYOR BRAD COLE

The Capital of Southern Illinois™



CITY OF ANAHEIM
MAYOR CURT PRINGLE

August 24, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6200

Dear Chairman Baucus:

I am writing in support of the free trade agreements (FTA) with Peru, Colombia, Panama and Korea. As the Mayor of Anaheim, California's tenth largest city, I fully appreciate the value these agreements will have in opening vital new markets and advancing local opportunities for international commerce.

For the past half century, increased market access achieved through trade agreements has played a major role in our nation's success as the world's leading exporter. Similar agreements with Peru, Columbia, Panama and Korea will continue this trend by removing barriers to goods and services exports, establishing secure and predictable legal frameworks and providing protections for investment and intellectual property.

As one of the premier California resort destinations, the City of Anaheim is known worldwide as a center for entertainment, tourism and convention activities. Additionally, Anaheim is also recognized as a world-class business center and the regional hub for economic activity in Orange County. Maintaining and expanding commercial ties with emerging economies in both South America and Asia will undoubtedly compliment our commitment to increasing business growth and international commerce within our city and the Orange County region.

Given the potential for new and substantial economic opportunities, bilateral trade agreements with our foreign partners is the next logical step to strengthening our national and local economies. For these reasons, I urge you to support the free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama and Korea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Pringle', written over the printed name and title.

Curt Pringle
Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

July 26, 2007

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6200

Dear Chairman Baucus:

As Mayor and on behalf of the City of Chicago, I urge you to support the free trade agreements (FTA) with Peru, Colombia, Panama and Korea.

Supporting these agreements will remove barriers to goods and services exchanged between our countries and allow for the better movement of technology, innovation and resources. These trade agreements make it easier for Peru, Colombia, Panama and Korea to purchase American goods, and it will help America benefit from the resources in each of those countries.

Chicago is a global city with a population of residents from Peru, Korea, Colombia and Panama that exceeds 50,000. Many of them came to our city for a better life, and the opportunity to succeed in a fair and open market should be reflected in the policies we have with these countries. Working with countries around the world in the context of free trade fosters good relationships, supports labor rights and promotes environmentally responsible policies.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard M. Daley". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Mayor

Useful Websites for the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

Fact Sheets on the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

- *USTR documents and press releases regarding the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement*
http://ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia_FTA/Section_Index.html
- *Information Regarding why one should support the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement and what they can expect to receive from it*
<http://export.gov/fta/Colombia/index.asp?dName=Colombia>
- *Information regarding State-by-State Benefits from the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement (from US Department of Commerce)*
<http://export.gov/fta/colombia/StateExpData.asp?dName=Colombia>
- *Information regarding the sector-by-sector industry benefits of the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement (from US Department of Commerce)*
<http://export.gov/fta/Colombia/SectoralInfo.asp?dName=Colombia>
- *USDA documents and state-by-state benefits on the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement*
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/us-Colombia.asp>
- *USDA fact sheet regarding the agriculture benefits to Individual Sectors through the Colombia Free Trade Agreement*
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/info/factsheets/ColombiaFTA06.asp>
- *Information regarding where one can find general benefits to the U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement (from the US Department of State)*
<http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/colombia/>
- *A collection of documents from the Latin America Trade Coalition supporting the Colombia Free Trade Agreement*
<http://www.latradecoalition.org/portal/latc/default>
- *Information regarding “U.S. Exports to Colombia: A State Perspective”*
http://ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/OTII/ColombiaFTA/Colombia_index.html
- *The ITC Report on the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement*
<http://www.usitc.gov/publications/pub3896.pdf>

Other Helpful Trade Links

- *Information, by State, on the importance of trade through the Peru, Colombia, and Korea FTAs.*
http://trade.businessroundtable.org/trade_2006/doha/mappop.html
- *Information on the Peru, Colombia, Panama, and Korea FTAs from the International Trade Administration*
<http://trade.gov/fta/index.asp>
- *Interagency Effort on pending free trade agreements*
<http://www.tradeagreements.gov/>
- *Information on the Trade Deficit and its impact of employment*
http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=108&subsecID=206&contentID=254454
- *Information on the impact of trade and the middle class*
http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=108&subsecID=206&contentID=254456