



LATIN AMERICA TRADE COALITION

Who Supports the Trade Agreements with Colombia and Panama? **Leading U.S. Newspapers!**

“We don't say it all that often, but President Bush is right: Congress should pass the Colombian free-trade agreement now. We believe that the trade pact would be good for America's economy and workers. Rejecting it would send a dismal message to allies the world over that the United States is an unreliable partner and, despite all that it preaches, does not really believe in opening markets to trade.”

— ***The New York Times***, November 18, 2008

“U.S. manufacturers and their employees are in a world of hurt. There is something House Speaker Nancy Pelosi could do right now that would boost their prospects. We're not talking about another government bailout. We're talking about something that would have an immediate, positive payback and wouldn't cost taxpayers a penny. In a word, Colombia. Pelosi could bring the Colombia Free Trade Agreement to a vote in the House.”

— ***The Chicago Tribune***, November 22, 2008

“While unions oppose the deal, there's no credible economic argument against it. Currently, more than 90 percent of Colombia's exports enter the United States duty-free under a temporary trade-preference program, but U.S. exports to Colombia face tariffs of up to 35 percent. The deal would level the playing field for U.S. exporters and create U.S. jobs.”

— ***Orlando Sentinel***, November 19, 2008

“The advantage for the United States is that it levels the playing field. U.S. products sold in Colombia currently pay tariffs of up to 35 percent, while practically all of Colombia's goods enter this country duty-free, thanks to existing trade law.”

— ***The Miami Herald***, November 17, 2008

“On its face, the Colombian FTA is a no-brainer: More than 80 percent of American exports of consumer and industrial goods to Colombia would become duty-free immediately. Remaining tariffs would be phased out over 10 years. We say no-brainer because most Colombian goods imported to the United States already come in duty free under previous agreements. This new deal would open the Colombian market for U.S. products, and that's good for American workers.”

— ***The Oklahoman***, September 23, 2008

“Colombian goods already enter this country duty-free; the pact currently blocked in Congress would open Colombia to U.S. exports.”

— ***The Palm Beach Post***, July 5, 2008

“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.”

—***The Washington Post***, March 31, 2008

“Colombia mostly sends us petroleum and coal, as well as coffee beans, cut flowers and clothing. We sell them lots of oil-drilling equipment, construction machines, computers, corn and consumer goods...The dropping of tariffs of up to 20 percent would encourage Colombia to buy more Florida agricultural products, especially oranges and tomatoes.”

—***Tampa Tribune***, March 1, 2008

“The Colombia trade deal would remove duties on all U.S. farm exports and 80 percent of other U.S. exports to the South American nation.”

—***Chicago Tribune***, March 1, 2008

“Maybe the next president can get it done, but why wait? The United States and Colombia have signed a valuable, worthy trade pact. Get it done now.”

—***South Florida Sun-Sentinel***, February 22, 2008

“Colombia is fighting a stubborn cocaine-fueled insurgency. Its government has managed to hold a Marxist drug-fueled rebellion at bay and is a strong U.S. ally. To leave them out of the trade partnership would be to betray a partner in democratic values... Congress should move quickly to pass the free trade pacts with Colombia and Panama and send Latin Americans the message that trade can lift everyone.”

—***Corpus Christi Caller-Times***, December 9, 2007

“First, and foremost, the benefits of free trade are undeniable... After years of democratization in the nations of Latin America, Venezuela — under cultish leader Hugo Chavez — has been turning toward collectivization. Successful trade, one hopes, can only help to negate his status and foster market economies and greater freedom throughout the region.”

—***The Republican*** (Springfield, Massachusetts), December 9, 2007

“Ratification of the trade promotion agreement would help consolidate Colombia’s progress by bringing jobs and income to its people... 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.”

—***Washington Post***, November 9, 2007

“For Congress to now say that it is disgusted by the violence, particularly against one sector of the Colombia population, and to use that argument to undermine a free trade treaty, is a travesty.”

—***The South Florida Sun-Sentinel***, October 29, 2007

“Few countries in the Western Hemisphere have shown as much improvement on human rights and international crime issues as Colombia, but Democrats threaten they’ll kill that deal, too. That would have the odious effect of keeping some Colombian

farmers in the illegal drug business. Reducing barriers to trade would give Colombian farmers a better incentive to sell legal agricultural products.”

—***The Detroit News***, August 12, 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.”

—***Miami Herald***, July 24, 2007

“Denying Colombia duty-free access to U.S. markets — and denying American exporters such access to Colombian markets — wouldn’t improve human rights for the 44 million Colombians. The trade agreement should be approved.”

—***Chicago Tribune***, June 23, 2007

“Offering the Colombians anything less than access to economic growth would be unfair and damaging not only to them, but to us.”

—***San Francisco Chronicle***, June 13, 2007

“Now the Democratic-controlled Congress is balking at passing a painstakingly negotiated free trade agreement with Colombia. This would be both a betrayal and a blunder — because free trade and economic growth are perhaps the only ways to help the country continue its progress from near-failed state to democratic government struggling toward a modicum of peace, prosperity and accountability after four decades of violence. Colombians will view rejection of the agreement as a repudiation of their hard work and proof that U.S. protectionism trumps American promises about friendship, security and joint prosperity.”

—***Los Angeles Times***, May 26, 2007

“The twice-elected Mr. Uribe is the most far-sighted leader Colombia has had in decades, and his FTA is an attempt to align his country’s future firmly with the hemisphere’s free-market democracies. Peru, Panama and Colombia are saying they want to be America’s political and economic partners. Do Democrats in Congress want to drive them into the arms of Mr. Chávez?”

—***Wall Street Journal***, May 4, 2007

“On a continent where anti-U.S. sentiment has been rising, Colombia is America’s most steadfast friend.”

—***Chicago Sun Times***, June 29, 2006