



Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative

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October 2008

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.”