



CAFTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
CAFTA Policy Brief – February 2005

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“Emphatically, Yes” **Newspapers Coast-to-Coast Urge Support for CAFTA**

“Well beyond its economic significance... the CAFTA vote will have huge symbolic importance for the United States and its role in the world... CAFTA and similar agreements provide hard evidence of America's lasting commitment to strengthening alliances, fighting global poverty and creating the building blocks of democracy.”

The Washington Post, February 22, 2005

“Central America, thanks to modern transportation and increased immigration, is closer to the United States than at any other time in history. Congress should back the CAFTA gamble to give the people there an opportunity for sustained prosperity.”

Boston Globe, March 14, 2005

“This state's congressional delegation, if it hasn't already signed on to support this latest free-trade agreement, needs to. It's good business, it's good for democracy, and it's good for Arkansas.”

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, April 7, 2005

“All in all, CAFTA is a tremendous deal for Georgia and its workers, farmers and businesses.”

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 28, 2005

“Central America's democracies are still fragile, and its governments need to show their impoverished people there's a hope for a brighter future. CAFTA is one tool to nurture that hope. U.S. foreign policy interests would be well-served by helping to build prosperity and freedom among all the nations in our hemisphere.”

The Denver Post, March 26, 2005

“CAFTA will be good for Wisconsin. The state should support it.”

Wisconsin State Journal, February 22, 2005

“American exporters will benefit from CAFTA.... The bottom line is that CAFTA could do much to consolidate Central America's hard-won start at stability.”

The Washington Post, December 30, 2003

“[T]he proposed agreement deserves Congressional support.”

The New York Times, December 22, 2003

“[The] American-Jordan free trade accord... included nearly identical language on labor and environment. Cafta actually goes further than the pact with Jordan, since penalty fines collected for not enforcing labor laws would be sent back to the offending country to fix the offense. The Central American accord is a good idea that will help job growth in a needy region.”

The New York Times, Nov. 24, 2004

“Cafta actually goes further than the pact with Jordan... the Central American accord is a good idea that will help job growth in a needy region.”

*The New York Times,
November 24, 2004*

"It's hard to see how any deal that keeps jobs in the region can be bad for the people who work there. At the end of this year, the global system of textile quotas that has restrained Asian exporters will expire, and jobs are liable to migrate from Latin America unless the region gets preferential access to the U.S. market. As well as providing that, the deal also creates a panel that would hear complaints about the non-enforcement of labor laws. Fines levied by the panel would be used to improve enforcement. These are valuable provisions."

The Washington Post, May 27, 2004

"Cafta is long overdue.... 80% of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to Central America will be duty-free 'immediately' and over 15 years all tariffs on these goods will be eliminated."

The Wall Street Journal, January 5, 2004

"The trade deal would be a fitting tribute for a region that has come so far from the chaotic, often deadly, instability of 20 years ago... Although they still face severe economic challenges, these Central American nations have made enormous social, economic and political progress. All five have democratically elected leaders... This trade deal on balance deserves widespread support in Congress."

Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2004

"CAFTA in the end isn't really about pitting U.S. workers against their Latin American counterparts. Rather, it's about helping Central Americans compete more effectively against the Chinese. And an economically stable Central America is very much in our interest."

The Providence Journal, June 5, 2004

"CAFTA is a deliberate and politically brave step in the right direction."

The Washington Times, December 21, 2003

"The pact would eliminate industrial tariffs..., opening once-closed markets and creating vibrant new opportunities."

Chicago Tribune, December 29, 2003

"U.S. trade with Central America is larger than that between the United States and Russia, India and Indonesia combined.... Free trade has some kinks, but changes are worth it."

Los Angeles Times, December 19, 2003

"Few things really worthwhile are easy.... The agreement, if the Bush administration can get it through Congress next year, would phase out tariffs, resulting in increased trade and more jobs among the signatory nations."

Houston Chronicle, December 22, 2003

"[T]he new agreement is a positive step. It merits congressional approval."

San Antonio Express-News, December 22, 2003

"The Bush administration has reached agreement with several Central American countries on a welcome free-trade pact. This is encouraging news.... Free trade is squarely within the long-term U.S. national interest."

Kansas City Star, January 6, 2004

"The trade deal would be a fitting tribute for a region that has come so far from the chaotic, often deadly, instability of 20 years ago."

*The Los Angeles Times,
November 18, 2004*

"The Bush administration did the right thing to sign the Central American Free Trade Agreement last Friday Economic growth would bolster the pro-democracy governments involved in CAFTA, and ensure that we have solid trading partners in the region."

The Miami Herald, June 1, 2004

"[T]he New Orleans area — home to some of the world's busiest ports — has a strong interest in expanding trade with Central America. Local political and business leaders need to work together to capitalize on opportunities that CAFTA could create in the future."

New Orleans Times-Picayune, July 8, 2004

"Yes to free trade with Central America. Emphatically, yes."

The Dallas Morning News, January 7, 2004

"Trade isolationists would like to live in a world where the United States is safely cocooned and American jobs "protected." Such thinking ignores the reality of the global economy and the fact the United States - and its workers - can profit from the market at large... Let's get CAFTA passed."

The Leaf Chronicle (Clarksville, TN), Nov. 27, 2004

"If CAFTA fails, American manufacturers and retailers won't stop buying low-cost goods overseas. But the textiles they might have bought from Central and South America will come instead from Asia -- and will enter the United States through Los Angeles and Seattle instead of New Orleans. Louisiana can't afford to lose such traffic."

New Orleans Times-Picayune, Oct. 15, 2004

"The proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement, signed recently in Washington, is squarely within U.S. economic interests. The participating countries - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua - already enjoy duty-free access to the American market for three-fourths of their exports. But U.S. exports to those countries face significant tariffs."

The Kansas City Star, July 15, 2004

"Anyone looking for confirmation of free trade's benefits need only come to San Antonio. Toyota is investing \$800 million to produce trucks here. Our city's highways vibrate with commerce carried from and headed to the border. In boardrooms and in classrooms, the language of business in San Antonio is not only English; it's also Spanish and Japanese. Free trade benefits San Antonio, the United States and our trading partners as well. This is why Congress should ratify CAFTA as a critical step in expanding economic prosperity in the Western Hemisphere."

San Antonio Express-News, June 6, 2004

"The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) bolsters prospects for the region's development while expanding markets mainly for U.S. agricultural producers and fabric makers. Approving CAFTA would allow U.S. apparel suppliers to position themselves in Central America before global textile quotas expire at the end of the year and China seeks markets more aggressively. The agreement would improve the economic prospects of countries in America's backyard and open export markets for U.S. producers."

The Washington Times, June 3, 2004