



September 9, 2008

Support the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I urge you to pass the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama. Tariffs are nothing more than taxes on the flow of goods and services across national boundaries. If these agreements are approved, taxpayers around the world will enjoy the fruits of free trade.

According to the Commerce Department, the United States is the world's largest exporting nation, and 25 percent of our economic growth in 2007 came from international trade. Congress should be doing all it can to promote the continued health of exporting industries. The U.S. International Trade Commission has estimated that approval of the Korea Free Trade Agreement would result in the increase of our domestic Gross Domestic Product by up \$10 billion to \$12 billion. Quick action on free trade pacts will help stimulate the economy.

If Congressional leaders continue to delay consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, we'd only be hurting ourselves. For 17 years, most of Colombia's exports to the U.S. enter duty-free, while our goods face tariffs when entering Colombia. The Colombia Free Trade Agreement would immediately eliminate tariffs on more than two-thirds of all U.S. farm exports and 80 percent of U.S. consumer and industrial products, thereby making our goods more attractive to Colombian consumers. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that approval of the deal would result in \$4 billion of new business. Congress shouldn't stand in the way of this expansion.

Time and again, the evidence has shown that taxpayers and consumers are big winners from more open trade in goods and services. Although special interests have a direct stake in perpetuating protectionist policies (and they often have the time and incentive to pay expensive lobbyists to work on their behalf), free trade delivers rewards to the vast majority of Americans. Remember that for every group or individual bemoaning these agreements, there are thousands of consumers benefiting from less costly and sometimes better products. With this come new jobs and greater economic growth.

The bottom line is that free trade works. But time is running out in the 110th Congress. Give the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama the up-or-down votes they deserve. Roll call votes on these packages will be heavily weighted in our Rating of Congress.

Sincerely,

Kristina Rasmussen
Director of Government Affairs