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Coalition Calls for Passage of U.S.- Columbia Free Trade Agreement

*28 organizations and businesses representing taxpayers, shareholders, and
businesses sign letter to Speaker Pelosi*

Washington, DC – Twenty-eight taxpayer, shareholder, and business groups have signed a letter to Speaker Pelosi urging passage of the U.S.-Columbia Free Trade Agreement. The letter was signed by 60 Plus Association, Alliance for Worker Freedom, Americans for the Preservation of Liberty, Americans for Prosperity, American Shareholders Association, Americans for Tax Reform, Amway, Arizona Center Right Coalition, Center for Fiscal Accountability, Center for Individual Freedom, Citizen Outreach, The Club for Growth, Connecticut Center Right Coalition, Consumer Electronics Association, The Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S., The Financial Services Roundtable, Florida Center Right Coalition, Freedom's Watch, FreedomWorks, Illinois Policy Institute, Institute for Liberty, National Center for Public Policy Research, National Taxpayers Union, Philip Morris International, Property Rights Alliance, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, Taxpayer Association of Oregon, and Tradition, Family, Property, Inc.

Under existing trade agreements, most imports from Columbia are already duty-free while Columbia still retains several tariffs on American exports. The U.S.-Columbia Free Trade Agreement will eliminate those tariffs. The Columbian House and Senate voted overwhelmingly to adopt this proposal with the enthusiastic support of the Columbian people.

“Congress should act at once to pass this agreement,” stated Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, **“America ought to reward allies like Columbia for their progress in embracing free market reforms.”**

Sales in new markets in Columbia will add \$4 billion to the U.S. economy, creating many jobs in both countries. American farmers and ranchers, who have been largely excluded from Columbia by existing tariffs, stand to benefit enormously from this new market.

“Free trade is the basis of a healthy economy,” continued Norquist. **“Protectionism demands that the government make me pay more for your product than you pay for my product. Free trade insists that consumers of all nations pay the lowest possible price for every product.”**



September 16, 2008

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and businesses representing hundreds of thousands of taxpayers, small businesses, shareholders, consumers and senior citizens we strongly urge you to allow a vote on the Colombian Free Trade Agreement. The agreement is nearly identical to the trade agreement with Peru that passed last year with wide bipartisan support.

Tariffs are nothing more than an invisible tax on all consumers. While some ninety percent of imports from Colombia are duty free, U.S. products still face taxes when entering Colombia. The Colombia FTA will eliminate this trade barrier and open new markets for U.S. products, introducing approximately \$4 billion into the U.S. economy. Consumers on both sides will benefit with more choices and lower prices. The benefits to both nations are undisputed.

The passage of the Colombia FTA is also imperative to show that the United States supports countries who have embraced free markets and economic liberalization. The recent history of Colombia is one that should inspire everyone, moving from a drug-dominated, underground economy to a free-market, capitalist economy in as short a period as they have is a remarkable accomplishment. President Alvaro Uribe is to be applauded for his efforts and achievements in this area. But that does not mean there aren't still many obstacles to be overcome. President Uribe needs the support of his United States allies, both politically and economically, now more than ever. Passage of the US-Colombia FTA would provide a significant boost in both arenas. In addition, we will build his popularity at home by spurring economic growth in Colombia.

Trade is the backbone of the US economy, accounting for 25 percent of our economic growth. The economic and national security benefits for the United States and Colombia are clear – the FTA will provide jobs and access to markets for peoples of both nations. Do not abandon our greatest ally in South America. Act now to pass the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

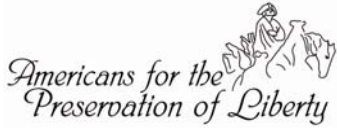
Sincerely,

Jim Martin
President
60 Plus Association

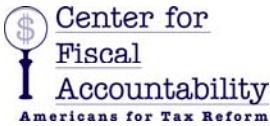
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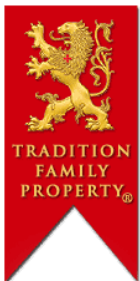
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