

MARK H. AYERS, President
SEAN McGARVEY, Secretary-Treasurer

MICHAEL J. SULLIVAN, 1st Vice President
DANA A. BRIGHAM, 2nd Vice President
EDWIN D. HILL, 3rd Vice President
JAMES A. GROGAN, 4th Vice President
JAMES A. WILLIAMS, 5th Vice President



NEWTON B. JONES, 6th Vice President
WILLIAM P. HITE, 7th Vice President
KINSEY M. ROBINSON, 8th Vice President
PATRICK D. FINLEY, 9th Vice President
JAMES P. HOFFA, 10th Vice President
TERRY O'SULLIVAN, 11th Vice President
JAMES BOLAND, 12th Vice President
WALTER W. WISE, 13th Vice President

Building and Construction Trades Department

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR—CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS
815 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W., SUITE 600 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-4104

(202) 347-1461

www.BCTD.org

FAX (202) 628-0724

June 27, 2011

Dear House of Representatives:

As President of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, I strongly oppose the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Columbia, Panama, and South Korea, and I urge you to oppose each of these trade agreements because they represent an expansion of failed trade policies that will cause great harm to workers in the building and construction trades.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton worked to pass the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that was negotiated by President George H.W. Bush. NAFTA has contributed to the erosion of America's industrial base and been a disaster for our members who build America's factories and retool and service them. Many of our unions represent manufacturing workers, as well as those in the construction trades, and our members have lost jobs as well as line workers in America's shuttered factories. The loss of manufacturing jobs also undermines our nation's ability to finance the public infrastructure (roads, bridges, schools) on which we all rely.

When unfair trade policies destroy our manufacturing base and erode the tax base for infrastructure, our jobs in the building and construction trades disappear too.

With that experience, I am very disappointed that Congress may soon consider the free trade agreements for Colombia, Panama and South Korea. These trade agreements, negotiated by President George W. Bush, replicate the failed trade policies of the past that have exploded our trade deficit, destroyed millions of jobs, driven down U.S. wages, undermined the Buy America policies that reinvested our taxes in our communities, and exposed our domestic laws to repeated attacks in foreign tribunals.

From the extreme violence against labor leaders in Colombia to the tax havens in Panama and the failure to address currency manipulation in South Korea, these trade deals are a bad deal for U.S. workers. In addition, efforts to provide expanded Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits are a recognition that jobs will be lost as a result of these trade agreements.

The Building and Construction Trades Department supports a more equitable trade model. Our nation can and must do better to enact fair trade policies that expand economic opportunities for all Americans. With unacceptable unemployment levels and working families struggling to recover from the Great Recession, our members want Congress to pass real job-creation legislation, not more job-killing trade agreements. In the end, working families will remember who is working for them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Ayers
President

