



# Alliance for Global Justice

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## Quick Links

[Please sign the Four Steps Toward Hope and Change in US-Colombia Relations Petition](#)

[CONGRESS IS ON BREAK THIS WEEK! Why not welcome them home with this message: NO PANAMA/COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!](#)

[To get contact information for your Senators and Representative, FOLLOW THIS LINK. For local contact information, click on the name of the Senator or Representative you are trying to reach.](#)

[To find out more about our Aug. 7-18 Delegation to Colombia, call 520-243-0381 or send an email to:](#)

[james@afgj.org](mailto:james@afgj.org)

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## May 22nd, 2009

## Campaign for Labor Rights ACTION ALERT

IN THIS ALERT YOU WILL FIND...

- \* WHAT'S UP WITH THE PANAMA & COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS?
- \* YES WE CAN...STOP THE PANAMA/COLOMBIA FTAs!--STEP ONE
- \* STEP TWO
- \* STEP THREE
- \* AN EXTRA STEP FOR THE EXTRA ADVENTUROUS!

## WHAT'S UP WITH THE PANAMA & COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS?

Not too long ago, CLR sent an email alerting people about the US Trade Representative Office' announcement that the Obama Administration would pursue passage of pending Free Trade Agreements with Panama and, with certain benchmarks, Colombia and South Korea. We noted that around the same time this announcement was released, the State Department had gone on record commending Colombia for progress in its human rights record. Meanwhile, the Pentagon was announcing new base-sharing measures with the Colombian military. Considering that murders of unionists and forced displacements are on the rise, we just aren't encouraged about the adequacy of these unnamed bench

marks, nor the necessary judgment to even assess them. What's more, based on the devastating effect NAFTA and CAFTA has had on Mexican, Central American, and US farmers, we are also convinced that, even with improved labor conditions and environmental standards, these pending FTAs would represent an all-out assault on family, cooperative, and sustainable farms and farming communities.

Steps have been taken to move the Panama FTA forward, especially since proponents believe it would be the easiest to pass. Thus, a Panama FTA would pave the way for passage of a Colombia and South Korea FTA.

We've been hearing that behind the scenes in the halls of Congress and the White House, all parties are not of one mind about these FTAs. The World Trade Online reports that:

"Assistant USTR for the Americas Everett Eissenstat...signaled that the administration would only send up the Panama FTA once assured that it would receive broad support that would create forward momentum to pass more controversial trade deals, such as the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement. "

....One pro-FTA source said movement on the Panama FTA is at this point driven by the White House, which is "just not prepared for the pain" that comes with moving a trade agreement through Congress."

Nevertheless, the Obama Administration has not rescinded its commitment to pursuing these FTAs and the article goes on to show that the White House plans action on the Panama FTA for the Fall. However, FTA advocates, including a number of leading figures in the Democratic Party, are pressing for passage of the Panama FTA before the new government there takes office in July.

***Our efforts to beat these FTAs are having an effect--but the struggle is far from over. The reason these neoliberal agreements are in jeopardy is because, in this time of Capitalism in crisis, economic and political powers fear the firestorm that these FTAs might touch off. The "Battle in Seattle" of a previous generation could become the "Fire that Will Not Abate in the United States"!***

The Campaign for Labor Rights doesn't want to see chaos in the streets. What we want to see is an end to anti-worker FTAs and an end to senseless wars so that our country can focus on the kinds of tasks we really need to take care of: health care for all, decent schools, good jobs, fair trade, and

environmental restoration!

***We've got these Free Traders on the run right now. Yes--momentum is on our side! But if we don't keep up the noise and demand an end to these neoliberal schemes, these FTAs will be pushed through. Now is the time to raise our voices! CLR has outlined three steps you can take to help stop these FTAs and demand that the government use its resources to help working families and farming communities-not subject them to the assaults of big agribusiness and transnational corporate greed!***

### **YES WE CAN...STOP THE PANAMA/COLOMBIA FTAs!-- STEP ONE**

Order or download your set of Four Steps for Colombia Postcards, complete with you BONUS "NO PANAMA FTA" stamps! We've already sent out a couple thousand of the Colombia Postcards and have just printed up several thousand more! We have also included a postage-stamp sized sticker that you can easily append to the postcards (or other mail you are sending to Congress) that have, in bold, red letters, the words: **NO PANAMA FTA!** The postcards are demanding that our Congress people use their votes and influence to secure these goals:

- \* NO US-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!
- \* NO US MILITARY AID TO COLOMBIA!
- \* STOP THE EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND FORCED DISPLACEMENTS!
- \* FREE COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS!

To order copies through the mail, tell us how many you want, and send an email to [clr@clrlabor.org](mailto:clr@clrlabor.org) or call CLR's Tucson office at 520-243-0381. We will send you the cards and stamps for free, but if you can help us out by sending a donation to cover printing and postage costs, that would be great.

**[Click HERE to Make a Credit Card Donation](#)**

You can also make a check or money order out to the

Campaign for Labor Rights and send it to:

1247 E Street SE  
Washington, DC  
20003

To download copies of the postcards and the "NO PANAMA FTA" stamps, go to:

[To Download the Front of the Postcard](#)

[To Download the Back of the Postcard](#)

[To Download "NO PANAMA FTA!" Postage-Stamp-Sized Stickers](#)

## STEP TWO

Please sign the Four Steps for Colombia petition and be sure and share this link with others:

[Sign 4 Steps Petition Here!](#)

## STEP THREE

CONGRESS IS ON BREAK FROM SATURDAY, MAY 23RD THROUGH MAY 30TH. What better way to make an impact on this issue than to contact your Representatives and Senators while they are visiting back home. Call their offices, set up a visit, go to their community meetings and let them know that we want workers rights, sustainable farms, community rights, and fair trade--not FTAs that close our factories, plow our family farms under, and turn our communities into ghost towns both at home and abroad.

To get contact information for your Senators and Representative, [FOLLOW THIS LINK. For local contact information, click on the name of the Senator or Representative you are trying to reach.](#)

## AN EXTRA STEP FOR THE EXTRA ADVENTUROUS

Would you like to see firsthand exactly why Colombian farmers and unionists are so opposed to a US-Colombia FTA? Let me invite you to come with CLR on our August 7-18 delegation to Colombia, hosted by Fensuagro, the farmers', farm workers' and aquacultural workers' union. Get ready to be inspired by the tenacious efforts of family and cooperative farmers, to be moved by the stories of Afro-Colombian refugees, to partake of the cultural richness of indigenous communities, to hear the bitter sweet stories of struggles, losses, and victories of Sugar Cane Workers, and to share in solidarity with Colombian unionists. The cost of the delegation is \$1,400, which includes in-country transportation, translation, two-meals a day, lodging, and assorted other expenses, but not international travel. Even if you are unable to make the trip, would you consider making a contribution to provide scholarships for young workers and student activists who cannot afford the full price?

To inquire more about the delegation, write [james@afgj.org](mailto:james@afgj.org) or call the CLR Tucson office at 520-243-0381.

To contribute toward a scholarship to send young students and workers on this delegations, please make a check or money order out to Campaign for Labor Rights and send it to PO Box 2815, Tucson, AZ 85702. Put "Colombia Trip Scholarship" in the subject line.

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*This Alert was prepared by the Campaign for Labor Rights.*

*We can be reached by phone at 202-544-9355 or 520-243-0381. You can also email [james@afgj.org](mailto:james@afgj.org) for more information.*

*Visit our website at: <http://www.clrlabor.org/wordpress/>*