

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 6, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our deep concern for the rights of Colombia's Afro descendents and indigenous populations, and to affirm that the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) should not be considered as drafted. We believe that the United States and the Colombian Government should take immediate steps to strengthen Afro-Colombians' territorial rights and prevent further displacement of Afro-Colombians.

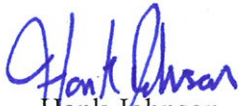
We are concerned that the FTA would stimulate business development in Colombia at the expense of these vulnerable populations. Colombia has the world's largest population of displaced people, an estimated 5.2 million, and 26 percent of Colombia's population is Afro-Colombian. These populations already experience disproportionate inequality in the labor sector and face major obstacles to unionization. For example, Afro Colombian workers are often forced into "Associative Labor Cooperatives" (CTAs), a labor model where workers are hired through sub-contractors, which substantially undermines worker protections and results in preventing workers from unionizing. Today, economic interests, including large scale mono-culture crop plantations and mining, continue to be a cause of displacement in Afro-Colombian areas. The FTA and the April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Action Plan do not adequately address these issues. Without adequate protections, the number of displaced persons will continue to increase and economic opportunity will continue to be beyond the reach of these populations.

We appreciate the Administration's efforts to grow the economies of the United States and Colombia but we must do so in a way that benefits the citizens of both countries. We must not tolerate economic inequality or persistent violence against Afro Colombians and indigenous people.

As you know, Members of Congress have consistently denounced the systematic paramilitary persecution and assassinations of Afro-Colombian, indigenous and labor rights activists in Colombia. We are concerned that our voices on this subject are not being heard and our concerns are not being adequately addressed. Full implementation of the Colombian Action Plan Related to Labor Rights, and the reform of the CTA model, are critical to any serious discussion of free trade with Colombia. We insist that the Ministry of Labor and Justice's protection programs, which the Action Plan seeks to broaden, include protection for Afro-Colombian labor activists who face political persecution.

We appreciate your attention and consideration to these matters and look forward to working with you in ensuring that labor and minorities rights in Colombia are protected if entering into a Free Trade Agreement between this country and the U.S.

Sincerely,



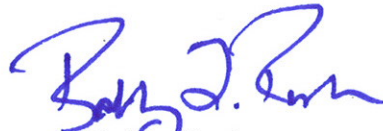
Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress



John Conyers  
Member of Congress



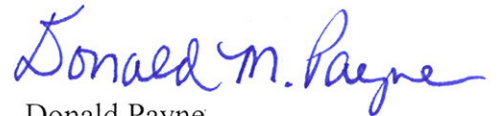
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress



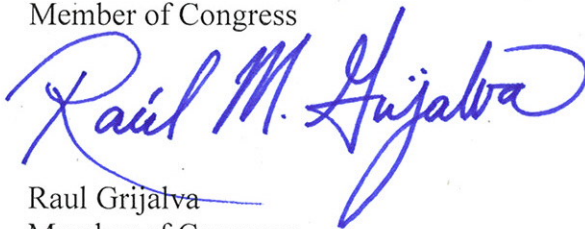
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress



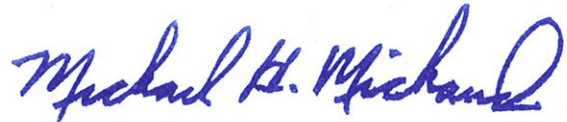
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Donald Payne  
Member of Congress



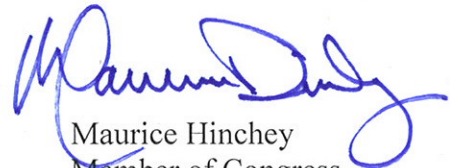
Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey  
Member of Congress



Jesse Jackson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson-Lee  
Member of Congress



Lynn Woolsey  
Member of Congress

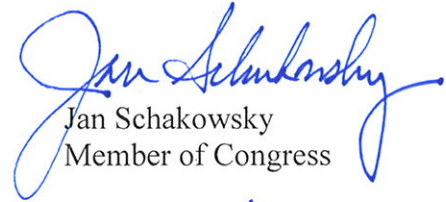


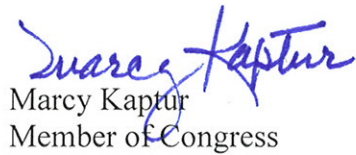
James McGovern  
Member of Congress

  
Bob Filner  
Member of Congress

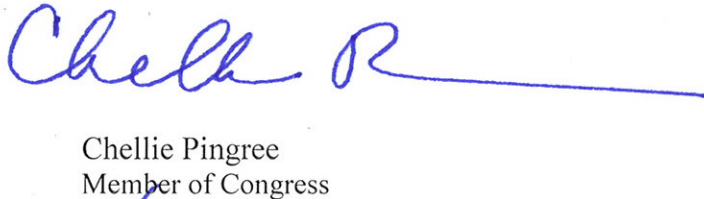
  
Dennis Kucinich  
Member of Congress

  
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

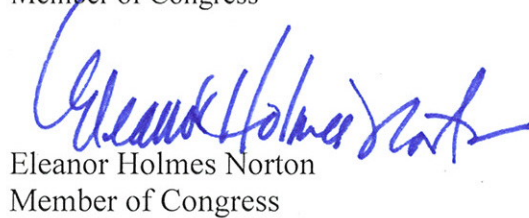
  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

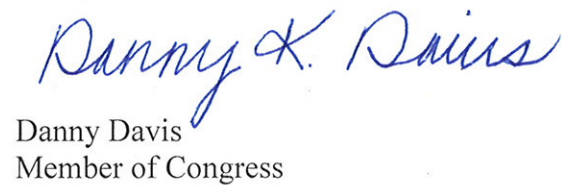
  
Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

  
Bennie Thompson  
Member of Congress

  
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

  
Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress

  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

  
Danny Davis  
Member of Congress

Cc: Honorable Dave Camp  
Cc: Honorable Kevin Brady  
Cc: Honorable Sander M. Levin  
Cc: Honorable Jim McDermott  
Cc: Honorable John Lewis