

Waters	Westmoreland	Woolsey
Watson	Wexler	Wu
Watt	Whitfield (KY)	Wynn
Waxman	Wilson (NM)	Yarmuth
Weiner	Wilson (OH)	Young (AK)
Welch (VT)	Wilson (SC)	Young (FL)
Weldon (FL)	Wittman (VA)	
Weller	Wolf	

NAYS—3

Kucinich	Nadler	Paul
----------	--------	------

NOT VOTING—22

Andrews	Forbes	Pryce (OH)
Bishop (NY)	Granger	Ramstad
Bishop (UT)	Gutierrez	Rangel
Buyer	Hunter	Rush
Cubin	Jones (OH)	Schwartz
Davis, Tom	Larson (CT)	Sires
Fallin	Meeks (NY)	
Ferguson	Petri	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members have 2 minutes to vote.

□ 1157

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 180, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

□ 1200

RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5724, UNITED STATES-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1092 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1092

Resolved, That section 151(e)(1) and section 151(f)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 shall not apply in the case of the bill (H.R. 5724) to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 1092 relates to the consideration of H.R. 5724, the

United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. The rule suspends the timelines for House consideration that are in the fast track law with respect to consideration of this specific trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress have a fiduciary obligation to ensure that the legislation passed through this Chamber represents the best interests of those that sent us here, the American people. To outsource that very basic legislative responsibility is to advocate the duties constitutionally prescribed to our branch and raises questions as to why we are here in the first place. The situation we find ourselves in today deals directly with that issue.

The President has attempted to dictate the legislative schedule of the Congress according to his political calendar. Over the objections of congressional leadership, he sent Congress the Colombia Free Trade Agreement in an attempt to force consideration of the measure within 60 days by using a provision known as Trade Promotion Authority, or fast track.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to dispel a few myths about the action that we take today. The rule we are taking up today does not in any way affect the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. It simply removes the timeline for considering it. It gives the House of Representatives the right to schedule when the agreement is undertaken.

There are some who have called into question whether Congress has the right to suspend fast track procedures for trade agreements. One need look no further than the Trade Act of 1974, the legislation that establishes fast track, to see that the very statute itself allows that, like any rule of the House, fast track procedures can be suspended.

We have also heard some questions about what consequences our action here today will have on the Senate's consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The answer is, it will have no effect.

The rule today was necessitated by the partisan and irresponsible actions of the President. Instead of working with Congress to reach agreements on this accord, he instead took the unprecedented step of sending the Colombia trade deal to Congress over the objection of congressional leaders.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have been promised a lot when it comes to trade. However, in a country whose economy has been devastated by ill-conceived trade deals, it can only be expected that the American people will remain wary. The promise of good-paying work on the horizon has consistently been dashed by the reality of job loss.

Last Friday's unemployment rate was 5.1 percent, and more jobs, over 80,000, were lost last month alone. It is yet another indicator of the worsening economic situation facing millions of America's families. Each day it becomes clearer that our country is teetering on the edge of economic dis-

aster, and, for millions, financial ruin is just around the corner. It is simply not the right time to move forward with this trade agreement.

The American people deserve an agreement that actually responds to the needs of the American worker, not makes promises that will not be met. By passing the rule today, we will no longer be bound by arbitrary deadlines and the House can bring up the agreement at the appropriate time and under the appropriate conditions.

Mr. Speaker, there is yet another reason why this free trade agreement is untimely and requires additional consideration moving toward passage. We have been promised time after time in trade legislation that there would be side agreements protecting the life and work of labor, that there would be environmental safeguards, that there would no longer be child labor. None of that has come true.

And it certainly makes one suspicious on this trade bill also because of the number of trade unionists who have been murdered. This makes the Colombia Free Trade Agreement hard to justify, given the continued violence against the union leaders, subsistence farmers, indigenous people and Afro-Colombians.

While President Uribe has made some progress, systematic killings are still far too prevalent to warrant the passage of this bill. Persecution of trade unionists is well-known because since the beginning of this year, 12 have already been murdered. Rewarding the Colombia Government with this bill under those conditions eliminates any leverage the U.S. Government has to improve the respect for human rights and the rule of law in the future.

To push forward at a time of economic insecurity is simply irresponsible for working families at home. To push forward in the midst of gross violations of human rights in Colombia is simply wrong.

It is the prerogative of Congress to suspend fast track if the timing necessitates it and only when it is in the best interests of the American people. By passing the rule today, we are reestablishing the House of Representatives as coequal to the President, and, in doing so, we are standing up for America's working families.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to my very good friend, the distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen many, many unexpected political alliances that have been formed over the past years that I have been privileged to serve here, but I never expected to be taking up a rule that aligns with the goals of Hugo Chavez and South American narcoterrorists.

The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement would deliver a significant blow

to Chavez's authoritarian designs for the region and the FARC's terrorist agenda. No one was quicker, no one was quicker to condemn the President's decision to send this FTA implementing legislation to Congress, than Hugo Chavez himself. So that is why, Mr. Speaker, what we are considering today is nothing more than the Hugo Chavez rule.

The agreement, the agreement that we hope very much we can see this institution pass, would help to strengthen democratic institutions, provide real economic opportunity for the Colombian people and solidify the rule of law. So naturally it is vehemently opposed by someone who is systematically dismantling representative democracy and free markets and resorting to corruption and crony capitalism to enrich government coffers at the expense of the working poor. That is the legacy of Hugo Chavez.

Naturally, naturally, Mr. Speaker, this agreement is also vehemently opposed by a terrorist organization that simply cannot continue to survive in a thriving, stable and transparent democracy with strong institutions and an increasingly prosperous population.

The Government of Colombia, its business leaders and its private sector unions all strongly support this agreement for the very reasons it is opposed by the region's most nefarious forces. It would be a giant leap forward in solidifying their attempts to take back their country from the violent and lawless groups that tore it apart for decades. And yet here we are today considering a rule that blocks consideration of the agreement under the rules of the Trade Promotion Authority which were established over 30 years ago.

Many supporters of this Hugo Chavez rule like to argue that this rule is as much about process as it is substance. I regularly make the argument that process is substance. So let's examine these claims, Mr. Speaker.

The argument has been made that by sending up the implementing legislation without an invitation, the President has violated the rules set forth by the Trade Act of 1974 and Congress must take special action to assert its role.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few years we have witnessed a number of struggles between the first two branches of government, so congressional prerogative is a familiar theme these days. And I am a strong supporter of congressional prerogative. As a result, the argument in this case has found an overly credulous audience in this body and proven persuasive to the uninformed, so I will do my Democratic colleagues the favor of reviewing the details of Trade Promotion Authority.

The statute outlines very clearly the responsibilities of the administration. It sets forth a number of negotiating principles. It demands that the administration closely consult with Congress prior to, during and after the negotiating process. It requires notification

90 days before entering into negotiations. Prior to signing, it requires notice of potential changes to trade remedy laws 180 days in advance and notification of intent to sign 90 days in advance, followed by advisory committee reports within 30 days. Sixty days after signing, a list of law changes is due. Ninety days after signing, an International Trade Commission report is due. All of this is designed to ensure that the concerns and prerogatives of the United States Congress are met.

The administration, Mr. Speaker, upheld both the letter and the spirit of the law at every single step. High ranking officials met with Congress 160 times prior to and during negotiations. They have held nearly 450 meetings since August of 2007 and taken 55 Members of Congress to Colombia to see the situation there for themselves. To say that the administration has not upheld their end of the bargain is outright laughable.

Now, what is Congress' end of the bargain under TPA? To hold an up or down vote within 60 days in the House and 90 days in the Senate. That is the deal, close consultation followed by a timely vote. Congress gets the final say, but it has the responsibility to not let a complicated and time-consuming negotiation go to waste or languish indefinitely.

We have a negotiation that was launched 4 years ago, concluded 2 years ago, and signed a year-and-a-half ago. Now, after all of this, all of this consultation, all of this time, the Democratic leadership wants to make an unprecedented, never before has this been done, an unprecedented rule change to allow them to abrogate their role under TPA, all the time while blaming the administration, and the administration is somehow to blame for a broken process. They are just making up this nonsense as they go along.

Mr. Speaker, ironically, on Wednesday morning when the Democratic leadership was announcing their intention to take this highly divisive, partisan and unprecedented action, I was sending a letter to several of my Democratic colleagues in which I was reaching out to them in hopes that they would join me in a special order next week to talk about Colombia. As colleagues who have gone to the country for ourselves, I was hoping that we could come together to simply share what we had seen firsthand in Colombia.

Under TPA, the House has, as I said, 60 days to debate and work together to reach consensus, 60 days to work in a bipartisan way. I thought that our special order describing our experiences would be a constructive and congenial way to begin. Unfortunately, the Democratic leadership has cut off this substantive process before it could even begin, killing any hope of bipartisanship on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, their actions are causing even more damage abroad. They are sabotaging our relationship with or

best and closest ally in South America. This is an ally that faces a hostile neighbor on its border which threatens not just Colombia, but the very ideals of democracy and free markets. This ally faces an even graver daily threat within its borders; a threat that has been weakened by President Uribe's brave efforts, but one that still exists.

□ 1215

I have gone to Colombia twice in the past few months, once with Commerce Secretary Gutierrez and once with the Speaker's House Democracy Assistance Commission. I have seen myself the transformation that has taken place. I have seen the safe and orderly streets of Bogota and Medellin. I have seen the new opportunities and economic growth.

I have met with the attorney general and discussed extensively his efforts to prosecute violent offenders and end the days of impunity for murderers. I have sat down with former members of the paramilitaries, whose leaders have gone to jail and who are now struggling to reintegrate into society with the help of government-funded social programs. This is a country that has come miraculously far in just a few short years and has so far to go.

I find it shocking that the Democratic leadership would turn their backs on our friend and ally who has accomplished so much and who asks for our continued help in accomplishing even more. This week we have all heard the lengthy testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. A very common theme I have heard from my Democratic colleagues throughout this testimony is concern for America's lost prestige abroad. They decry what they call our unilateralism and our disregard for the concerns of our allies.

Yet today they propose to flagrantly commit what the Colombian Vice President has called a slap in the face. Editorial boards across this country have similarly slammed this action.

The Washington Post compared it to telling Colombia to "Drop Dead." The Las Vegas Review-Journal says that what we are doing is "stabbing our trade partners in the back."

The Democratic leadership is determined to isolate our greatest ally in South America and weaken the region's strongest advocate for democracy, flouting national security and our international credibility. The damage to our interests and our leadership will be significant and lasting.

Our friends and allies will realize that our word at the negotiating table cannot be trusted and the rules can be changed in the middle of the game according to the whims of electoral politics.

This rule must be defeated for the sake of our national security interests, our leadership in the international community and our responsibilities as an institution. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. Speaker, with that I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York, the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Mr. RANGEL.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Thank you so much, Madam Chairlady, for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I could not disagree with my friend from California more, and there is no one in this House that I believe that the administration has not spoken to more in concern for pieces of trade legislation, and I doubt whether there is anyone that has the compassion and the concern more than I about the people of Colombia who I have learned to admire, respect and work with over the years, not only with their political problems, but certainly their fight, their narcotics and trying to preserve democracy in that country.

The President has violated protocol in terms of not fulfilling the outlines that we have been using historically. What I have to say applies whether you are a Democrat or a Republican.

If, in the rules that the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee has outlined to us, there is an area of consultation before the President actually sends a complex piece of legislation to the House, which is more conducive to bringing us together, saying to the House that you have 90 days, and if you don't do anything in 90 days that it's the House of Representatives that killed the bill designed to help our friends in this area? Or one may say, Mr. President, you forgot to consult with us? You forgot to consult with the Ways and Means Committee. You did not deal with some of the issues that we have.

As you just changed the rule and just sending it over saying it's your responsibility in the House, what we are saying is that let's give the House more time and not a timetable to see what can we do to facilitate an atmosphere that would allow the Members at least to know what's in the bill.

It is really strange that the ranking member of the Rules Committee has presented us a speech this morning that is so similar that I don't remember the last time anyone in the administration has talked about the bill.

Oh, Hugo Chavez, I go to sleep every night wondering what he is going to do. Castro, my God, we should vote for the people of Colombia and against him and make him a big threat in the community.

I am not saying these things shouldn't be considered, but how many people, Republican or Democrat have the slightest idea what's in the trade bill? Why not give them an opportunity to make this decision, not based on 40 days, 50 days or 90 days, but for us to bring up these things.

When has anyone ever heard that they didn't have a crisis in terms of

peace and tranquility against terrorism and assassination in Colombia? The question we may ask is Uribe doing, a man that I respect, as much as he should? Should he be doing more?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from New York has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New York 1 more minute.

Mr. RANGEL. The real question I think we should ask, my friend, is I know you have a problem. We have problems in every major city. Why don't you allow us to share with you some of the techniques we have, some of the technology, work with your law enforcement so at the end of the day those who claim that it is murder that stops us from voting on a trade bill, that we will be able to say that we are working with them.

I hope you would rethink the vote. This vote is going to apply to every President, every Speaker of the House that deals with us. Do you believe they can change the rules and then they say that we dictate the legislative calendar of the House of Representatives? I think not.

You change the procedure. We defend the rules of the House.

What are we giving up? We are giving us an opportunity, one, to find out what's in the trade bill, and, two, which is most important, what can we do to resolve the issues that force Members to be against it.

I appreciate the words of my friend from California, but you have to do that, you are the ranking member. I remember when I had to say things that I had to say. Let's work together on this.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very happy to yield 2 minutes to a hardworking fighter for freedom, a member of the Rules Committee, the gentleman from Miami, Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, what the majority leadership of this Congress, what this rule is saying to Colombia today is you voted to tie your economy to the United States, but, sorry, we don't care.

You are at war with narcoterrorists armed to the teeth by drug money and given sanctuary by neighboring governments. Sorry, we don't care.

You have voted, not once, twice, overwhelmingly, to support your brave President and his government and the Colombian armed forces as they fight the narcoterrorists and defend your rule of law. Sorry, we don't care.

Well, I say to the people of Colombia, like the President of the United States, many of us here in Congress are with you, and you are not alone despite this day of legislative action that will live in infamy.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, an expert in this issue, and a member of the Committee on Rules, Mr. MCGOVERN.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentlelady for her leadership on this important debate, and I rise in strong support of this rule.

Mr. Speaker, the policies of the Bush administration have produced an American economy in crisis. People are losing their jobs, fuel prices are at a record high, food prices have dramatically increased, confidence in the economy is at an all-time low. Maybe this is a radical idea, but shouldn't the energy, passion and focus of the administration be on fixing these problems?

This administration has turned a cold shoulder to the plight of American workers. They have opposed efforts to extend unemployment benefits. They have no plan to help 45 million Americans get health insurance. They have even opposed expanding health benefits to children. Their absolute indifference towards our fellow citizens is stunning. It takes my breath away.

Well, that must change. The Speaker of the House has the right to prioritize legislation. She has stated quite clearly that we want to continue to work with President Uribe to make progress on improving human rights, the rule of law, ending impunity, breaking Colombia's political and military ties to drug lords and paramilitary groups and protecting and promoting basic labor rights.

If the Colombian FTA came up today for a vote, I will strongly oppose it. I have repeatedly told the Colombian Government that I am always willing to reassess my position.

But when it comes to issues like human rights, I refuse to be a cheap date. The U.N., the Red Cross and U.S. and Colombian human rights groups all describe a worsening humanitarian crisis in Colombia. The number of internally displaced grew by 27 percent over the past year due to increasing violence throughout the country.

Over each of the past 3 years, murders of civilians by the Colombian army have been increasing. Violence against trade unions continues at an extremely high level, and the vast majority of cases of murders of labor leaders remain unsolved.

It is true that murders of trade unionists in 2007 were about half of what they were in 2006. Even then, Colombia had the highest rate of trade union murders in the world. But death threats, attacks and disappearances skyrocketed. But this 1-year hiatus in the murder rate may be over. In just the first 12 weeks of 2008, 17 trade unionists have already been assassinated.

Like many of my House colleagues, I have traveled to Colombia several times in the past 7 years. I have gone to Putumayo, not just to fly over fumigated territory, but to meet with hundreds of human rights victims and campesinos on the ground. I have been to Barrancabermeja, Sincelejo and Popayan.

I have traveled to San Jose de Apartado and to Arauca, where violence from all armed actors reigns supreme and community leaders are murdered like flies. I have visited the slums of Bogota where the poor and the internally displaced struggle to survive.

I spent hours in meetings with human rights groups, with families whose loved ones are held in brutal captivity by the FARC and with victims of violence by the paramilitaries and the Colombian army.

I have met with the constitutional court, religious and labor leaders, with indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians and dozens of government and military officials. There is so much more to Colombia than the administration's day and a half excursion tours to Medellin and Cartagena.

Congress must insist upon improvements in human rights in Colombia and not paint a rosy picture simply to secure a trade agreement. U.S. policy must take responsibility for the behavior of Colombian behavior forces trained with U.S. tax dollars, take into account the continued suffering of the civilian population in the midst of an ongoing conflict and support the rights of victims after a decade of atrocities.

I remain dedicated to the Colombian people. I will never advocate walking away from Colombia. I also strongly support the right of the Speaker of the House to take up trade agreements when it makes the most sense to do so.

I urge my colleagues to adopt this rule and to remain engaged with Colombia on these important issues.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, for a unanimous consent request in opposition to this Hugo Chavez rule, I yield to my friend from Michigan (Mr. CAMP).

(Mr. CAMP of Michigan asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Today's vote to delay consideration of the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement is nothing short of the majority party playing politics and catering to their special interests. The actions of the majority remind me of those of a school yard bully—when losing, simply change the rules of the game. We should reject these changes, and we should honestly and fairly debate the merits of this deal.

It's ironic that the majority party is delaying a vote on the agreement because by and large it benefits American workers most. The United States already grants Colombia duty-free access to U.S. markets. Colombian goods cross our borders virtually tariff-free. But, 80 percent of American made consumer products, and none of our agricultural products that we send to Colombia enjoy that same duty-free access. This is a one-way street. The U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement would remove the tariffs on American products and create an even playing field for our workers.

I am disappointed to see the Speaker stand in the way of lowering tariffs on American products. I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, who is a strong op-

ponent of this Hugo Chavez rule, the gentleman from Shreveport, Louisiana (Mr. MCCRERY).

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this extraordinary, unprecedented, and, I believe, dangerous change to the House Rules.

Congress first gave trade promotion authority to the President in 1974, in order to allow him to engage directly with our competitors around the world to level the playing field, eliminate barriers to American exports and create jobs for American workers.

Passing this rule would undermine that authority and damage United States credibility abroad because our trading partners could rightfully question the commitments of our government in negotiating trade agreements. I have heard it said that this rule will allow us to consider this agreement this year after the election, but what this rule would do is to eliminate the uncertainty under TPA that Congress will vote on this agreement.

It doesn't guarantee a vote by any time certain. It doesn't push the vote off until after the election. It simply turns off the clock entirely.

Even postponing congressional consideration of this agreement does tremendous damage to America's competitiveness. Right now Canada, the European Union, are completing trade agreements with Colombia. As a result, they will gain a competitive advantage over American products.

□ 1230

Colombia will buy tractors, mining equipment and fertilizer from Canada, France, and Germany, instead of from Illinois, Georgia, and Texas.

Chairman RANGEL, my good friend, said nobody is talking about the economic benefits, they are all talking about Hugo Chavez. Well, my good friend knows that is not the case. And besides, the reason we are not talking about it all that much is because it is a no-brainer from an economic standpoint. I am mystified as to why any Member would oppose this agreement when all it does is level the playing field for American workers.

Today, American workers compete against imports from Colombia that enter our country virtually duty free, while our exports going to Colombia face high tariffs. This agreement eliminates those obstacles to our goods and services and supports American jobs.

I agree with Chairman RANGEL's assessment last month that denying a vote on this agreement wouldn't help address the concerns about labor violence in Colombia. In fact, this agreement would help Colombian labor unions. The agreement includes robust, enforceable international labor organization core labor standards, standards included with the strong support of the Democratic leadership to require Colombia to continue the tremendous progress it has made to improve labor rights.

I plead with my colleagues today: Do not make a vote which will undermine

the credibility of the United States, making it more difficult for any future administration to eliminate barriers to the sale of products made by us. Vote "no" on this rule.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, we certainly do need a balanced, enlightened trade policy. But this debate is not about trade, it is about the guiding principle of the Bush Administration—arrogance—arrogance that has served our country so poorly.

This President, personally proclaiming himself to be a "uniter, not a divider" at the beginning, quickly transformed himself into the "decider." And that lone decider has unleashed one divisive, disastrous decision after another on our land. Mr. CHENEY's current chief of staff, he summed up this attitude very directly: "We're going to push and push and push until some larger force is going to make us stop." Well today, our Speaker, backed up by this House, says "Stop."

The go-it-alone, disdain for allies, dismissal of anyone who has a different point of view, has left this White House isolated. It has left us with a disastrous war, and now Mr. Bush's recession.

We'll secure a more responsible, enlightened trade policy, but we won't secure it until we trade it for a new President.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1½ minutes to my Rules Committee colleague, the gentleman from Pasco, Washington, who is vigorously opposed to this Hugo Chavez rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stop this unprecedented attempt to rewrite trade laws and jeopardize fair trade for our American farmers.

Washington State is the most trade-dependent State in the Nation. One in three Washington jobs is tied to international trade. Since 1991, Colombia has had open, free entry into the U.S. for many of their products, while steep tariffs block our farmers' access into Colombia.

This agreement would immediately, immediately, Mr. Speaker, eliminate tariffs for Washington State apples, cherries, pears, wheat, beef, and more. If the issue is the economy, what better way to stimulate our Nation's economy than to level the playing field and wipe out unfair trade barriers for our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, Representatives and Senators are elected to vote, so let's do our job and vote on the Colombia agreement. What the House is now considering is an effort to delay, to hide, to slam the door, shut the door on free

and fair trade that millions of Americans' jobs depend on. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this Hugo Chavez rule.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), a valued member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I thank our distinguished Chair.

There is a fundamental issue that we face in this rule, and it is this: Does Congress cede its authority under the Constitution to the executive, or does it exercise it?

Mr. Speaker, from a distance—I have only been here a little over a year—I watched with dismay as a citizen, seeing Congress year after year relinquish its authority, turn that over to the executive, not do its job of accountability and oversight, not do its job on trade, essentially not exercise the constitutional authority that we are custodians of, each and every one of the 435 Members who have been elected.

The President exercised his prerogative under a rule that was enacted by this House in 1974, but against the advice of the Speaker and against the advice of the Senate majority leader. The President did what he could do, and that is send over on his own timetable a trade agreement when it wasn't ready to be considered.

And the Speaker, in her judgment, and I support this, stood up for the prerogatives of this legislative branch, where we have the responsibility to be the final voice of the people who sent us here.

The bottom line question is: Will Congress assert the authority that it has under the Constitution?

We can exercise it. The best circumstances, we do it in cooperation and in consultation with the executive. But if it is unilateral, a my-way-or-the-highway approach that has been so often employed by this chief executive, then it becomes incumbent upon us to stand up and assert the constitutional responsibility we have.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, to speak in opposition to this Hugo Chavez rule, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Marysville, California, the ranking member of the Trade Subcommittee, Mr. HERGER.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, this procedural vote, if it is successful, Congress would be rebuffing the Colombia agreement through technical gimmicks and rejecting a level playing field for American workers.

Colombian workers and producers already have free access to the U.S. markets, but we don't have reciprocity. Our manufacturers and farmers need this agreement to sell their products, create jobs, and compete against foreign producers. A vote for this rule is a vote against American workers, period.

Since the agreement was signed nearly 500 days ago, congressional Republicans and the White House have tried to work with the Democratic majority

to approve this agreement. We reached a bipartisan consensus nearly a year ago to ensure congressional consideration of this agreement.

In sending up the agreement, the President said that he was open to continuing discussions with the Democrats. The Democratic leadership, through this rule, has firmly shut the door to any discussions.

Members should be keenly aware of the very negative foreign policy ramifications of this vote. This rule would be cheered by belligerent leftist guerrillas abetted by Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez who seek to undermine the democratically elected Colombian government with menacing ramifications.

This rule is a public slap in the face to a loyal ally at the epicenter of a philosophical war between democracy and totalitarianism, capitalism, and socialism.

President Uribe made it very clear that the best way to support Colombia's struggle for economic and political security is to pass this agreement. Today's action would trounce that plea and embolden the foes of democracy. I urge a "no" vote.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Trade.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Trade policy under the Bush administration has been badly off track. The approach of the administration and the then-Republican majority in Congress was to go their own way and dismiss bipartisan effort, starting with a side letter to the Jordan FTA thwarting enforcement of worker rights provisions negotiated by the Clinton administration.

In the cases of Morocco, Bahrain, and Oman FTAs, it was left to Democrats to negotiate with governments of those countries to bring their laws into compliance with international labor standards before a Congressional vote, with no help from the administration.

And we all remember CAFTA, where the administration's approach was go it alone from the beginning through the end, with false claims that the other nations were already in compliance with international standards.

And last year, with the loss of a congressional majority, the Bush administration was forced to include fully enforceable labor and environmental standards in the Peru FTA. And when Democrats pressed for Peru to bring into compliance with the language of the agreement, the administration attacked Democrats and refused to even participate in the changes that Peru made in its legal structure.

At that time Democrats made clear that Colombia was different from Peru with the level of violence against workers, impunity from prosecution, and laws that did not meet inter-

national standards, and that sustainable progress was required before consideration. The administration kept on insisting that the status quo was good enough and has done nothing to address these concerns.

Urged by both the House and Senate Democratic leadership not to proceed with the Colombia FTA under present circumstances, the administration decided once again to go its own way. This rule reflects the Speaker's response to assert a congressional role on international trade under the Constitution of the United States of America.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 13 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from New York has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member of the Trade Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons why what the majority is doing today is gravely harmful to our security. Colombia is a close ally under siege. And as The Washington Post points out today: "Score this action as a boost to Venezuela's agenda of destabilizing democracy in Colombia."

By all accounts, the Colombian agreement is a big plus for American exports and American employment. What the majority is doing is giving near free-market access to Colombia and taking nothing for our workers. This agreement would cut tariffs 80 percent on U.S. beef, and 15 percent on U.S.-tractors.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California, the distinguished Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms. PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I commend her for her very distinguished leadership of the Rules Committee and for bringing this very important rule to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, the reason we are here today is one I wish could have been avoided, and I think it is important to put it in context because I have heard our colleagues talk about the merits of the bill or talk about any precedent on rules, and I have heard them talk about different things. But I think it is important to know what brought us here today.

On Monday, I received a call from the President of the United States, always an honor to receive a call from the President. This is after months of our going back and forth with members of the cabinet and the rest about when and if they would send up the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The President informed me that he would be sending the bill over the next day.

I recommended against it. I said, Mr. President, you shouldn't send it for

two reasons. If you send it and we take it up, it will lose. Now you think it is very important to pass a Colombia free trade agreement, and in the Congress we have people who share your view. And we have others who share your view that we should pass it as soon as we address the concerns of America's working people, and others who will never be for it. But let's talk about what the possibilities are for passing it, and those possibilities are greatly diminished if you send that bill to the Congress under these circumstances.

Apart from the fact that it would be a breach of protocol, and let's just talk about that. A successful trade agenda depends on joint partnership between the Congress and the administration, as was the case recently in the Peru Free Trade Agreement. Had the administration followed the established protocol of congressional consultation relating to the submission of any free trade agreement, we would not have to take this action today.

By his actions on Tuesday, the President abandoned the traditions of consultation that have governed past agreement. In fact, the action the House takes today is more in keeping with the spirit of the rules than the White House's move to force a vote.

□ 1245

But, as I said, just from a practical standpoint, Mr. President, you simply don't have the votes. And if we are to try to arrive at a place where the concerns of the American people are addressed, we need more time to do that.

I also said what I have said many times to the President. If we are going to be successful in passing a trade agreement, we have to first tell the Americans people that we have a positive economic agenda that addresses their aspirations, addresses their concerns about their economic security.

This bill's been around for a while, and matters have only gotten worse in our economy. The former Chair of the Fed has said we're in the throes of a recession. The current Chair of the Federal Reserve last week, the end of last week, testified to Congress that there's a possible recession.

Many people, I mean, the joblessness numbers of last week, again pointed to a steeper downturn in our economy.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the Speaker yield for some questions?

Ms. PELOSI. No. You control your time. With all due respect to the gentleman, I'll use mine.

The fact is, as I said to the President, many people in America now are concerned about their jobs. They're concerned about losing their homes. Most people won't, but most people are concerned about losing their living standard.

When the cost of groceries and gasoline and the cost of health care and education and other staples continues to go up, and the purchasing power of the income that people have is either stagnant or going down, they have concerns about their economic security.

So let's have a timetable for the American people. Let's have a timetable on our consideration of a trade bill that addresses the concerns and is compatible with the needs of America's working families. That is, I think, the only fair thing to do.

The President ignored those concerns and sent the bill over. I pledged to this body, as Speaker of the House, that at the appropriate time, if many of these concerns are addressed in terms of America's working families, that we can take up legislation for such a trade agreement.

Some have concerns about the content of the agreement. Others have concerns about the treatment of labor organizers in Colombia, and it's a real concern, and one admitted to by the administration and the Colombian Government. There are differences of opinion as to how this is changing, but let's see how we can work together to make that change.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask again if my distinguished California colleague would yield.

Ms. PELOSI. Having control of the time, I will retain the control of the time, Mr. Speaker.

The important point here is, whether it's the substance of the bill, whether it's the conditions in Colombia, they are to be, obviously, major considerations.

But what we're saying to the President, we can't do much about some of these things. We certainly can address the provisions in the bill. But I'm not here to talk about that now.

What we can do something about, what we haven't done enough about is to send a positive economic agenda forth. And these are not difficult. Most of what we're talking to the President about are part of what has passed this Congress in mostly an overwhelming bipartisan way.

Whether we're talking about rebuilding the infrastructure of America, whether we're talking about investments in an innovation agenda, our commitment to competitiveness to keep America number 1, and that innovation begins in the classroom, and we have to have a strong commitment to the education of our people, whether we're talking about tax credits for our energy bill which we passed here, which would immediately create jobs. No, if we don't do it we will lose jobs that exist now. Same thing with infrastructure. If we don't make those investments, our projects will have to discontinue. But many more are ready. Dirt is ready to fly. The projects are in the pipeline.

There is a way to create good-paying jobs right here in America. We've passed the legislation. The vehicles are there for us to do it. And at the same time, we have to address the concerns of those who have lost their jobs, whether it's unemployment insurance or summer jobs program for their children or other initiatives.

So this is nothing new. And, in fact, the whole idea that we were going into

recession is nothing new to most families across America. It took a while for the President and his administration to accept that fact, and, when they did, we could talk. And when they did, we could talk, we could work together, as Mr. BOEHNER and I did, with the Secretary of the Treasury, to put together a stimulus package that had strong bipartisan support, and, as the President has said, has not gone into effect yet. And when it does, I know it will inject demand into the economy, create jobs and, I think, stimulate the economy.

But since we did that, matters have only become worse, necessitating the need for us to do more. And we certainly should do more for our economy before we pass another trade agreement. It's all possible in the days that are before us.

But instead of having the President's timetable, we have the timetable of the House of Representatives, we have a timetable for America's working families.

And nothing that we are doing here now should be misconstrued in terms of our attitude toward Colombia. Colombia is our friend, is a neighbor in the hemisphere. The relationship between Colombia and the United States is an important one.

We have concerns about workers in Colombia, and we respect the leadership of President Uribe. And as I said to the Ambassador yesterday, I hope you will convey that message to the President, and when you do, I hope you will also tell him we congratulate him on his excellent representation in the United States in ambassador service here.

So this isn't about ending anything. It's about having a timetable that respects the concerns, the aspirations, the challenges faced by the American people. We are the people's House. Their timetable should be our timetable.

I urge our colleagues to support the rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds before I yield to the leader to say that I had hoped to ask the Speaker if, in fact, the votes are not there, why it is that we had to do this the day after the President sent this message up, why we could not have waited 45 days. It was my hope that the Speaker could have answered that question for us. Unfortunately, she has not.

With that, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Republican leader, our friend from West Chester, Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Let me thank my colleague from California for yielding, and say, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues, that our economy is struggling. Families and businesses are dealing with the rising cost of living, and certainly the job market has slowed. At a time like this we should be working together. And as the Speaker said, she and I came together and our Members came together on both sides of the

aisle earlier this year to pass an economic growth package. The checks will be going out to Americans here beginning in the middle of May and will occur, continue to go on through the end of July. These checks, again, are not out in the marketplace. We hope they'll be out there soon, and we hope it will help revive our struggling economy.

But the action that's being taken here today is going to do nothing more than to hurt American businesses and American workers.

The Speaker earlier went on about the fact that the typical protocol here was not followed; that the President send this bill to the Congress without the approval of the Speaker of the House.

Now I think it's time to set the record straight on exactly what has occurred. There have been hundreds and hundreds of meetings over the last 15 months trying to come to an agreement on how this bill shall be considered. There have been changes made. There have been side agreements that have come forth as a result of this.

And over the course of the last six or eight weeks, there have been serious conversations between the administration and the Speaker of the House about the consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. And the reason this bill was sent up here this week was because, not one time over these 6 weeks, has the Speaker agreed or made a commitment to the administration that this bill will be considered this year. The President's been willing to work with the Congress. The conversations, again, have gone on for 15 months. But not one time during that 15 months was there ever a commitment by the Democrat majority to bring this bill to the floor for a vote in the House.

I don't think the President had any choice but to bring, to send that free trade agreement to the Congress and force Congress to act.

And so what do we do? We don't go try to work to see if we can get the votes. We don't try, in a bipartisan way, to move this agreement. No, we're going to go in and cheat. We're going to change the rules under which the consideration of this free trade agreement should operate between the House and the Senate. We're not even going to give it a chance.

And anybody that thinks that well, we're just going to push this off for a couple of months, that is nonsense. This vote today is a vote to kill the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, nothing more and nothing less.

The Speaker points out, well, the President did this and, frankly, there are other priorities in the House.

Let me tell you what. When we passed the Andean Trade Preferences Act earlier this year, virtually everything that comes from Colombia to the United States comes here duty-free. The Colombian Free Trade Agreement would allow U.S. manufacturers, and

U.S. workers who produce these goods, to send our goods to Colombia virtually tariff-free.

We're doing nothing here but hurting American workers and American businesses. Why?

I think the Speaker made it very clear. This action today is nothing short of political blackmail. The Speaker made it clear that she has her agenda. She wants the President to deal with her on her agenda, and we're not going to move this bill until the President deals with her agenda. That is not the way to deal with our trading partners around the world.

I've listened to candidates that are running for President, especially candidates on the Democrat side, who have talked about the fact that the United States needs to be more willing to engage the rest of the world, that we need to listen, that we need to reach out to countries around the world. There's probably no place that's more important for us to reach out than South America.

Here we have a country in South America that's doing their best to fight off terrorists in their own country. A message that we could send, not only to Colombia, but to the rest of South America that we want to engage in them, exactly as many of these contenders for the Democrat nomination, points that they have made.

What does this say to Colombia? What does it say to South America? And what does it say about free and fair trade around the world?

This is a precipitous step in the wrong direction. We're sending a very bad message for our partners around the world, all in the name of election-year politics. I think that it's regrettable, it's despicable.

If we're going to have a vote here, why don't we put the Colombian free trade bill up for a vote and let the House work its will on that bill, because the fact is, I think it would pass.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. For a Republican minority, and particularly the gentleman from California, who whine day in and day out about their inability to offer amendments to even the most minor of bills, I've never seen a group so eager to give up their right, in fact, the right of every Member of this House to offer an amendment to this trade agreement in a rush to rubber-stamp yet another failed so-called free trade agreement.

As one Republican pointed out, yeah, it's been the policy since 1974. Guess what? 1974 we were the manufacturing colossus of the world. We ran trade surpluses. We had a robust middle class in America. It was bad policy then. But after 24 years of that bad trade policy, our manufacturing's cut in half. The middle class is losing ground. They're unemployed. We're borrowing \$2 billion a day from the rest of the world, including Communist China, to buy things that we used to make here in

America, and they think we should do more of the same.

I've heard this and played this game before. I've never voted for one. But every President since I've been here, Republican and Democrat, says, hey, we negotiated this deal in secret. You can't fail us now. Yeah, it's got big problems, but we'll fix them later.

Guess what? Later never comes. Because this Congress, until today, has never had a spine to stand up to the special interests that are pushing failed trade policies, policies that fail the American people to benefit a few on Wall Street. This is about Main Street.

The House is growing a spine today. This is a great day and the beginning of a new trade policy for the American people.

□ 1300

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, to speak in opposition to this Hugo Chavez rule, I'm happy to yield 1½ minutes to my very good friend from Morris, Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule. Why is Latin America all today watching this debate in this House? Because today the House of Representatives is going to tell the world how we treat our best friends, how we treat our best friend in Latin America. Who is our best friend in Latin America? The democracy of Colombia. Who is America's most reliable partner in counter-narcotics and counterterrorism in Latin America? The democracy of Colombia. Which elected national leader is the most popular elected official in all of this hemisphere? The President of Colombia, President Uribe. Why? Because he succeeded in reducing violence.

Today, 73 percent of Colombians today say they feel more secure and more safe prior to President Uribe 6 years ago. In fact, Colombia today is safer than Washington, DC.

Today, this House will vote to set Colombia aside, and we will turn our back on our best friend in Latin America. Why again is Latin America watching? Because leftist Hugo Chavez and his proxies, the narcotrafficking FARC, had declared they want to defeat the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. They can't defeat President Uribe at the ballot box, but they want to in this Congress.

The Prime Minister of Canada said it best: If the United States turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve.

Our friends in the Democratic majority say this is all about election-year politics, but we must understand that turning our back on Colombia will have long-term consequences for Latin America.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois, a member of the Ways and Means Committee and Chair of the Democratic Caucus, Mr. EMANUEL.

Mr. EMANUEL. I would like to thank my colleague for lending the time.

Mr. Speaker, we are having a conversation here about trade and globalization and about how to make sure that, in fact, globalization is a win-win strategy for the American people. And we were talking about Colombia, but what we really are talking about is the effects of globalization on the American economy.

And in fact today, if you take a look at *The Washington Post Business* page, there's a new survey out showing the middle class feeling worse in this period of time than ever before, more squeezed by rising costs. Energy is up nearly 2 bucks a gallon since 2001. Nearly \$2 up. Health care costs have doubled. College costs are up 64 percent, and yet the median household income in this country shrunk \$1,100. The middle class are feeling squeezed.

Globalization can be a good thing. Trade can be a good thing. But if you don't have an agenda to make sure Americans win in that globalization, you're going to get a squeeze on the middle class where they resist the attempts to open up markets to American-made products.

What we need here, and what we are seeking here, is a new deal for the new economy for the American workers. And that means when health care costs are up like that, we make sure there's health care security to the American people, which is why it was wrong to veto a children's health care bill for America's children to give 10 million children's parents who work full-time health care.

It is why it is wrong that when we have an extension of the hope and lifetime college credit so Americans can get to community colleges, can get the chances for their kids to go to college, it is wrong to allow that tax credit to end.

It is why we are trying to make sure that, in fact, American people have a retirement security and a universal 401(k) so those who work full time, 75 million Americans, who do not have a savings plan outside of Social Security have in fact a 401(k) like the rest of us. It's an agenda to make sure there is an economic security plan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. EMANUEL. No conversation about trade is ever about trade. It's about the standard of living of the middle class of this country.

Globalization could be a good thing if you have an agenda, and just trade alone is not an agenda to make sure that the middle class of this country, that built this country since World War II are strengthened to compete and win in this globalized economy.

And what we are ensuring today is that we have in fact a trade deal that is not seen as a cost to the American people but seen as an opportunity to succeed in that world, and we today are making sure that there is a win-win strategy to that globalization.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as I prepare to yield to the Republican whip, I'd like to yield for a unanimous consent to my good friend from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

(Mr. SHAYS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHAYS. I rise in strong opposition to H. Res. 1092, which will in effect defeat the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement by postponing consideration of the legislation indefinitely. It is more than ironic to me that, at a time when our economy has slowed tremendously, Democratic leaders are seeking to derail efforts to enhance our export market, which has been one area of strength in our economy.

The fact is, this trade agreement will help U.S. manufacturers and high tech service providers export to Colombia, a great friend and ally, where many of our products face tariffs. If any country deserves our support for aiding efforts to build a stable economy, it is Colombia. The Government has taken great strides in preventing attacks by paramilitary groups, and if we are ever going to curtail drug production from Colombia, it will be because of a stable economy, which free trade helps create.

I urge my colleagues who support economic growth, free trade and better relations with our neighbor to reject this misguided resolution and keep the Colombia free trade agreement on track.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to yield 3 minutes to my good friend from Springfield, Missouri, who will vigorously oppose this Hugo Chavez rule.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman.

I, too, vigorously oppose this rule. It seems to me the House today is doing two things that this Congress has done too often. One is, if you don't like the rules, you change the rules; and two is, we continue to take actions that reduce confidence in dealing with the United States. When you change the rules, other countries just simply don't want to deal with you.

Five hundred days since this treaty, this agreement was negotiated in good faith. Changes made sense then in elements that dealt with the environment and labor that the Colombians went back at our request to make. Sixteen months of talking to the leaders of the majority about what was the best day to bring this agreement, now 500 days old, to the floor of the House, and it's going to happen today or it's apparently not going to happen anytime in the near future.

We had no trade agreements before we went to the process of Trade Promotion Authority because nobody wants to trade with you if they don't think you're dealing in good faith. Nobody wants to deal with you if they don't think you're dealing in good faith.

This is about jobs. It is about middle-class jobs that my good friend from Illinois just talked about. I mean, how much more middle-class jobs could you try to provide than you provide when we open their market to us? Seventeen years ago we opened our market to them. This is not a debate about whether we can compete with Colombian products or whether their workers are being treated fair. Their workers already make products that come in here every day with virtually no tariff.

This agreement would let our workers send products there with no tariff. Eighty percent immediately would have no tariff. Very quickly, 100 percent would have no tariff. The 8,600 Caterpillar jobs in Illinois would be sending their products to Colombia without the 15 percent tariff. Why wouldn't we want to give those 8,600 labor union workers a 15 percent advantage that they don't have today?

When you change the rules, bad things can happen. This is about manufacturing jobs. It's about union jobs. It's about middle-class jobs. And of course, it is about our closest ally in South America, the second biggest country in South America, a country that for 17 years has had access to our markets and, in the last decade, has worked closely with us to try to solve their problems and the problems of this hemisphere.

This is a huge mistake today. It is the wrong signal to send not just to Colombia but anybody who's thinking about working with the United States of America. You have got to deal with countries in good faith. We are not doing that. We are not dealing with our own workers in good faith. I hope we do everything we can to defeat this rule.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1092. Colombia is an ally and a friend, and I commend President Uribe for reducing violence and unrest in Colombia. However, Colombia still leads the world in trade unionist murders. According to Human Rights Watch, 17 have been killed this year alone and more than 400 over the last 6 years. Hardly any of these murders have been investigated or prosecuted.

This is not only about human rights. This is about domestic responsibility. How can we trade away jobs when unemployment is climbing and our economy is in recession? We need to expand and strengthen trade adjustment assistance. We must educate and train American workers to better compete in the global economy.

The President had a choice. He chose to force a vote, and today he is getting that vote: a vote declaring that strong-arming Congress will not work, a vote for American workers and their families, a vote for human rights.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" and stand up for workers' families both here at home and in Colombia.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would be happy to yield to one of the greatest proponents of free trade, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from The Woodlands, Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, America's status in the world has never been smaller than this day. Who could imagine the world's largest economy cowering from Colombia behind the calls of protectionism? Who could imagine the world's greatest democracy too frightened to even debate, even consider this agreement. Who could imagine that this Congress would send a signal to the world that we are not just an unreliable leader in trade, we are an unreliable negotiator in trade? It is embarrassing and it is dangerous. And it will cost America jobs.

Today, Colombia can sell their products into America with no tariffs, no restrictions. But when we try to sell our products, we find barriers and costs. My workers in Texas want to know why can they buy products in Colombia at the local mall but we can't sell our products around the world? Colombia is a strong trading partner. They have reduced violence. They have embraced the rule of law. They are a strong ally. They deserve an up-or-down vote this year.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlelady from New York, and I am so much in favor of this process that I had to bring two constitutional books to the floor to be seen by my colleagues.

I support this initiative because it restores the constitutional authority to this floor and to the Speaker of the House. And for someone who has voted for trade bills that are fair, I ask my colleagues to recognize that we have an obligation to the American people. For if we look at the month of March, the third month of declining numbers of U.S. jobs, with losses widespread across all sectors and the biggest losses coming in construction and manufacturing, the experts, including Federal Chairman Ben Bernanke and former Federal Chairman Alan Greenspan, have confirmed the serious challenges to the United States economy. One former Labor Secretary has also uttered the word "depression."

This is an opportunity for us to be able to establish our authority on the floor to work through legislation and to ask the question of my friends on the other side of the aisle, if trade bills are so effective, why are we losing jobs? Why are people without employment? Why are we in this economic crisis?

And so we are standing up for American workers. We are standing up for the workers in Colombia. I have the greatest respect for President Uribe. I

look forward to working on legislation that addresses the labor concerns of working-class indigenous Colombians, and this is a two-way street. My friends on the other side of the aisle cannot prove that ignoring the Constitution will get us jobs.

Vote for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1092, the rule for consideration of H.R. 5724 implementing the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI for her exemplary leadership on this important issue and for bringing this rule to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital to delay the consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, FTA. The Republican-controlled 109th Congress recklessly allowed the President to precipitously pass free trade agreements without sufficient consideration of the impact on our economy and hard-working Americans and without ensuring that the labor rights of workers are protected in the country seeking the FTA. Today more than ever, with our economy suffering from a substantial downturn, which includes rising unemployment and a housing foreclosure crisis, it is imperative that the Democratic-controlled 110th Congress continue our practice of providing sufficient consideration of free trade agreements prior to their implementation.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting Colombia last year, and I am extremely concerned about the ongoing oppression of Afro-Colombian populations. Afro-Colombians face the same social barriers that all Afro-Latinos face around Latin America; social marginalization, lack of access to health care, lack of educational opportunities, lack of workforce opportunities. In Colombia, however, this marginalization is intensified by the ongoing conflict. The effects of the armed conflict, specifically forced displacement, in Colombia falls disproportionately on the back of Afro-Colombians. In fact, Colombia's highest rate of displacement in 2003 was recorded in the Chocó region, where approximately 75 percent of the population is Afro-Colombian. Because Afro-Colombians largely inhabit areas that have been neglected by the federal government, they have been extremely appealing targets for narco-traffickers, guerilla insurgent groups, and paramilitary forces. Afro-Colombians have been forcibly and violently displaced, and they continue to face a range of human rights abuses that go uninvestigated by the judicial system.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Colombian Government must be more active protecting and promoting the rights of Afro-Colombian populations. This must take the shape of providing more access to health care and education, especially for internally displaced persons. Additionally, more security must be established in typically neglected regions.

H. Res. 1092, as reported by the House Rules Committee, provides that two sections—section 151(e)(1) and section 151(f)(1)—of the Trade Act of 1974 shall not apply in the case of H.R. 5724, to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. In effect, Mr. Speaker, this rule will suspend the requirement that the Colombia Free Trade Agreement be considered within 60 legislative days in the House. It will give Congress the prerogative to schedule a vote on this piece of legislation, working with labor and many other

groups concerned about American workers and fair trade.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that rushing this legislation to the floor would be an incredible mistake. We are currently in the midst of an economic downturn, with numbers released last Friday showing a sharp increase in the number of jobless Americans. According to these numbers, the number of jobs outside the agricultural sector fell by 80,000 last month, a figure that represents the biggest drop in nearly five years.

March is the third month of declining numbers of U.S. jobs, with losses widespread across all sectors and the biggest losses coming in construction and manufacturing. The experts, including Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, have confirmed the serious challenges facing the United States economy.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to strengthen the American economy. This Congress must put American workers first. I believe that, through bipartisan negotiations coupled with urgent action taken to repair the struggling American economy, we can create the conditions for a successful free trade deal with Colombia. However, Mr. Speaker, this will take time.

Instead of working with Congress to address the legitimate and serious economic concerns of the American people, the President has engaged in highly partisan politics to attempt to ram this legislation through the Congress. On Tuesday, President Bush took the unprecedented step of sending his Colombia trade deal to Congress without following established protocols of congressional consultation. By engaging in this political maneuver, the President has forced Congress to take this action.

The rule we are considering today would remove the fast-track timeline for the Colombia free-trade agreement. By doing so, this rule returns the role, provided by the Constitution, of scheduling considering of measures to the Congress. The authority to do so is provided in the Fast Track law, PL 107-210, which explicitly recognizes "the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating the procedures of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as any other rule of that House." Today, we are doing exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there are a number of issues that need to be addressed before a free trade deal with Colombia is approved. In addition to the concerns about the American economy and American workers, trade legislation should also benefit the people of Colombia, particularly the working classes. I remain concerned about many ongoing abuses in Colombia that, in my opinion, make such a deal inappropriate at this time. In particular, I am concerned about the suppression of labor rights in Colombia and the targeted killing of labor organizers. Two Foreign Affairs subcommittees, the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight and the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, held a hearing last June about the ongoing pattern of labor violence in Colombia, and I would like to see many of the issues raised in that hearing addressed before a trade deal with Colombia is signed.

I believe that President Alvaro Uribe Velez has, since taking office in August 2002, made important strides toward establishing state control throughout the country, to revitalize the

economy, and to combat corruption. I also believe that a fair free trade agreement can immensely benefit the people of Colombia. Colombia continues to face severe income disparities, coupled with poverty and inadequate social services. According to World Bank estimates, 65 percent of Colombia's population lives below the poverty line. Poverty in rural areas is particularly severe, with rates in these regions approaching 80 percent, and the World Bank estimates that 38 percent of rural residents do not have access to potable water, and 68 percent do not have access to sewage treatment services. In addition, Colombia's rural areas have an estimated illiteracy rate of 15 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we must work together to develop and pass a trade bill that will benefit the American economy, and that will also trickle down to benefit all levels of Colombian society. I was proud to cosponsor and to vote for the Trade and Development Act of 2000, which included the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act. This legislation expanded the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which is intended to facilitate the economic development and export diversification of the Caribbean Basin economies. I supported this initiative because it not only benefited American workers and the American economy, but it also carried true benefits for the people of the target nations. I am proud to vote for fair free trade legislation that will benefit workers both here and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I support this rule because it will return to Congress its constitutionally granted power to schedule consideration of legislation, and it will give us the flexibility necessary to hold bipartisan negotiations regarding this legislation. I urge my colleagues to put the American economy and American workers first during this financially uncertain time, and to support the passage of H. Res. 1092.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as I yield 1 minute to my friend from Washington, I would say to my friend from Texas that if she turns to page 1,136 of the book that she held up, she would see that that has the rule we are abrogating with this vote that we are about to take.

With that, I yield 1 minute to my good friend from Auburn, Washington (Mr. REICHERT).

Mr. REICHERT. As a representative from the State of Washington, the most dependent State on trade in the Nation, I strongly urge my colleagues to reject this unprecedented rule and allow the Colombian Free Trade Agreement to come to the floor to a vote. I traveled to Colombia last weekend to see firsthand the progress that country is making. I met with union members who support this agreement. I met with union members who oppose this agreement. I met with President Uribe. I met with the labor minister. I met with the attorney general there. I met with the people who have been disarmed and left the paramilitary organizations. I met with shantytown residents.

You want to talk about human rights? Those people are the poorest people in the world. Those are the people we can help with this agreement.

□ 1315

Not only can we help poor people here in the United States of America, but this is designed to help poor people, struggling people in Colombia. Human rights, ladies and gentlemen, is worldwide. When we give them jobs, we give them hope.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire from my colleague how many requests for time he has remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I have a long list of people here I would say to my friend, the distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules.

May I inquire how much time we have remaining, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 4¾ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from New York has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. May I inquire of my friend how many speakers she has remaining.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I have one more, who is not presently on the floor. So I will reserve my time.

Mr. DREIER. Well, I would be happy to use the 5 minutes if the gentlewoman would like to yield me 5 minutes because we've got lots of people who feel strongly about that, and I know we could expand our thoughts on this with your 5 minutes.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I think I'll reserve it. Thank you very much for the offer.

Mr. DREIER. Just thought I would offer it as a possibility for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my very good friend from Miami, who is the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I deeply regret the effort today to postpone timely action on the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. For over a year, advocates of this agreement have worked tirelessly with our counterparts to bring it to the floor for an up-or-down vote.

We have the power to make a difference. We can make a difference not only here at home, but in Colombia and throughout the hemisphere as well. Colombia is a close ally, fighting our common enemy of drugs and antidemocratic regimes in the region. We must take a stand for our national security and against the growing influence of Iran and other rogue states in the hemisphere.

The choice is clear. This rule change is nothing but an abdication of responsibility and a decision to leave the hard decisions for another day. With the Colombian FTA, American businesses will benefit greatly, our ally will be strengthened, and our interests in the hemisphere will be secured.

I urge my colleagues to join me and vote "no" against this procedural vote.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I continue to reserve.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am happy to yield 1 minute to

my very good friend and a passionate free trader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating that the Democrat majority this week can find time to rename post offices, but somehow cannot find the time to vote on a trade agreement to help create more American jobs.

We're talking about a trade agreement to where over 90 percent of Colombian goods come into our country duty-free, yet only 3 percent of our goods go into their country duty-free. We're trying to level the playing field here, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to create more American jobs. What could be more fair?

Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to sit down with the Fed Chairman this week. And as we talk about tough economic times, we ought to learn the lessons of history. And one of the lessons of history is that starting a trade war can bring about a recession, and that's what we see the Democrats doing. People are struggling to make their paychecks stretch. Why don't we create more jobs? Why don't we level this playing field?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about our ally, Colombia, Hugo Chavez wants this trade agreement to never see the light of day, and our Democrat colleagues agree.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I will continue to reserve.

Mr. DREIER. May I inquire of my friend; so I assume there are no further speakers then?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. My last speaker has not yet shown up.

Mr. DREIER. So I guess I should infer from that that there won't be any more speakers, other than your close, I presume.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I think that's accurate.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my very good friend from Fairfax, the distinguished former chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Government Oversight and Reform.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. I oppose this resolution strongly, Mr. Speaker.

We call this fast track authority for a reason. No argument about process niceties can change the meaning of those words. This is supposed to be a deadline for a vote in the House.

The administration has been talking and talking, and we think that if they didn't bring this forward, it would never come up for a vote at all. This is the vote. That's the very point of the requirement we're being asked to waive today.

Look, the supposed "failure to consult" is just the latest pretext for the shameless politicization of free trade

policy and the abandonment of a key ally. The perverse truth underlying the political battle lines over trade that this action would harm American interests at home and abroad, in fact, American workers would benefit from the provisions in this agreement much more than their Colombian brothers and sisters.

Colombia already has access to the U.S. market under the Andean Free Trade Agreement. This opens 80 percent of Colombian markets that currently are closed, have high tariffs, to American farmers and American manufacturers.

Legislating, like elections, is about choices. And changing the rules, moving the goal line beyond reach is the wrong choice on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. DREIER. I would again inquire of the distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules if, in fact, there are going to be any other speakers on the other side of the aisle.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. There are none.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time to simply say that this has been a very interesting debate. Unfortunately, our colleagues on the other side have put forward some, well, let's say some inaccuracies. The fact of the matter is that over the last 4 years, when this process began, the administration has been working very closely with hundreds and hundreds of meetings in a bipartisan way to come together so that we can do what both Democrats and Republicans alike have said that they want to do, strengthen our ties within this hemisphere and do what we can to ensure that we bring about an agreement which will work to create jobs right here in the United States.

The distinguished ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee has just reminded me of the fact that every country with which we have a free trade agreement, every single country, we enjoy a surplus of trade, a trade surplus. So the notion that pursuing these FTAs somehow costs us jobs is preposterous, and the facts don't hold it up.

One of our friends on the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio), talked about the fact that we were the manufacturing giant in 1974, 34 years ago, when fast track authority was put into place. And I will tell him that today we are still the world's manufacturing giant. In 1974, we had a \$1.5 trillion economy; today, we have a \$14.1 trillion economy.

So as was said by the Republican leader, Mr. BOEHNER, this is a no-brainer, as Mr. MCCrery said, this is a no-brainer economically. We need to recognize that if we as a Nation are going to maintain our leadership role, we have to shape it.

Vote "no" on this horrible Hugo Chavez rule, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I need to put on the record the fact that America is not the manufacturing giant. China is the manufacturing giant, followed by India.

Mr. DREIER. Would the gentleman yield?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. No. I would like to have my time to close.

The people who talk today about free trade never mention fair trade. That's been a problem for me for a long time. If it has not affected their economy, they're very lucky.

I happen to represent an economy that has been greatly affected by trade policies that did nothing for the American workers, that did nothing to produce more jobs. The idea that we would again continue to follow that failed policy surprised me.

But the most important thing today, we are not debating the Colombia-U.S. Free Trade Compact. What we are debating today is whether or not the House of Representatives is going to take back what it is entitled to take back, and that is, responsibility for scheduling matters that come to the floor for consideration. It is a very important point. We are perfectly entitled to do it under the law. It affects the Senate not a whit.

And I am proud, frankly, to say again that our prerogatives, which have been slipping away from us for the past 12 years, all the Congress' prerogatives going to the executive department, that has to stop. And I not only want to stop this one, I would like to regain some of the abilities that we have lost already to represent the people who send us here.

I urge everyone to vote "yes" on this rules change today.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, Article 1, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations. Through the years, Congress has recognized the President's role in negotiating trade deals and has granted the President a great deal of leeway with regard to trade. Congress, however, must ratify every trade deal, and the President has a great deal of responsibility to work with elected members of the legislative branch before pressing forward with any negotiated trade agreement.

One power Congress has occasionally authorized for the President is the so-called "fast track" negotiating authority. "Fast track" permits the President to negotiate a trade agreement while giving Congress an opportunity to ratify the agreement without amendment and within a certain time frame. "Fast track" allows the House and the Senate to set its own rules with respect to considering a trade agreement under these expedited conditions. In November 2006, using its "fast track" powers, the Administration signed a Trade Promotion Agreement with the South American country of Colombia.

In June 2007, I visited Colombia and met with President Uribe, other Colombian leaders, and U.S. embassy and military professionals serving there. Through the years, I have been extremely skeptical about U.S. involvement in Colombia's civil war and have voted in the House to reduce U.S. military aid to that coun-

try. That said, Colombia is an important ally of the United States and the trade agreement negotiated between the U.S. and Colombia is worthy of support. Should it pass, most U.S. exports to Colombia—including Missouri's agricultural exports—will enter that country duty-free. Under current law, nearly all Colombian goods enter the U.S. duty-free.

On April 8, 2008, the Administration took the unprecedented step of delivering the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement to Congress without having fully consulted with the House and the Senate. In my view, the Administration's maneuver seriously jeopardizes prospects for the trade agreement's passage in the House. Without bipartisan support, I am convinced the House would reject it, sending a negative message to Colombia and derailing important benefits to Missouri agriculture that would be brought with the deal.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to give Congress more time to review the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement and to prevent an embarrassing defeat of the agreement on the House floor, I will vote today to delay its consideration. I remain hopeful that the agreement can be considered before the end of the 110th Congress.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1092 and urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

The Administration would like to force this Congress to take up the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, FTA, before August.

This resolution will allow Congress, not the Administration, to decide if and when this body should take legislative action on the U.S.-Colombia FTA.

I strongly oppose the U.S.-Colombia FTA. This is yet another flawed, NAFTA-style, trade deal that harms workers in the United States and in Colombia.

Our workers and our communities have been devastated by our flawed trade policies. Since 2001, over three million valuable manufacturing jobs have been lost due to the NAFTA model of trade, now being perpetuated in the U.S.-Colombia FTA.

In Ohio, where we have lost more than 236,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs, we know the realities of these failed trade policies all too well.

The actual number is much higher because we have not included job loss in the service sector and supply chain that we cannot account for. Excluded are local businesses, such as restaurants, just down the road from closed manufacturing facilities that are forced to close their doors. The ripple effect includes a loss of health care and college educations.

Trade agreements should be responsible. The U.S.-Colombia FTA continues the destructive trade policies that spur the exodus of well paying jobs and undermine the ability of working people to protect their living standards. That is not a responsible trade deal.

Trade agreements that fail to enforce worker rights are irresponsible. Approximately 2,300 labor organizers, labor leaders and union members have been murdered in Colombia since 1991. Today, Colombia is still the most dangerous country in the world for union members.

In February, an AFL-CIO delegation met with leaders of the major Colombian labor federations. According to the AFL-CIO "[l]eaders of the major Colombian Labor federations told the delegation they oppose any free trade deal

between the United States and Colombia until the government takes strong action to stop the violence against trade union members and ends assaults on union rights.”

The U.S. must not continue to expand a failed trade policy based on the NAFTA model. It outsources valuable American jobs and accelerates the transfer of capital out of the U.S. It is a model that harms workers, erodes environmental protections and limits access to healthcare for the poor in the countries we trade with.

Congress must take a much needed step back and bring all parties to the table to examine how we can fix our broken trade system.

Common sense suggests that our trade policies should promote workers’ rights, human rights, strong protections for our natural resources and the environment, and expansion of Buy American practices that support American competitiveness. What America needs is Fair Trade, not Free Trade.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1092 and against the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Colombia is an ally and friend of the United States. I commend President Uribe and his government for reducing the violence and unrest in Colombia. They have made great progress.

However, Colombia still leads the world in trade unionist murders. According to Human Rights Watch, 17 have been killed this year alone, and more than 400 over the last six years. Hardly any of these murders have been investigated or prosecuted.

It would be immoral and irresponsible to pass a free trade agreement with Colombia while these conditions persist. But this is not only about human rights. This is about domestic responsibility.

How can we trade away jobs when unemployment is climbing and our economy sinks deeper into recession? Surely, this is not the time to rush into another trade agreement. Doing so without first strengthening our economy and helping American workers is just plain wrong.

The global economy is changing rapidly, and we need to catch up. We need to expand and strengthen Trade Adjustment Assistance. We need a Trade Adjustment Assistance program that educates and trains the American workforce to better compete in the global economy.

Yet the Administration and its allies on the Hill have expressed no interest in making this program meet the needs of American workers. Advancing free trade agreements without first addressing the needs of American workers is just plain irresponsible.

We are here today because the President has once again chosen confrontation over compromise. Like with FISA, the Iraq War and countless other important issues, the President has determined that he alone knows what’s best and that Congress and everyone else should just go along. Of course, his disastrous record over the last 7 years—on the economy, jobs, the deficit, health care, disaster relief and our national security, to name just a few issues—should make any fair observer pause before deferring to his judgment. By unilaterally forcing this issue, the President has yet again demonstrated his arrogant disregard for American workers and their families.

The President had a choice. He chose to force a vote, and today he is getting that vote.

This vote will declare that strong-arming Congress will not work. This vote will be a vote for human rights. This vote will be a vote for American workers and their families.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” and stand up for working families both here at home and in Colombia.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment that the Members of this body have been forced to make such a difficult decision with regard to the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. As you know, the Bush Administration sent this proposed agreement directly to Congress without the level of dialogue many of us would like to have seen to ensure we can reach agreement on this matter. I fear that the poor and unprecedented decision by President Bush to place this matter before the House of Representatives without the consent of leadership will result in collateral damage to the Trade Promotion Authority protocol that is instrumental in our work to promote commerce with other countries. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am constrained to voting “present,” with the hope that continued dialogue between Congress and the White House will lead to a positive resolution of this entire matter.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, an ancient proverb cautions “Arrogance diminishes wisdom.” Sadly, this proposal ignores that warning, indulging institutional arrogance at the expense of wise legislating. Based on the transparent facade the President’s transmittal of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement violates a “protocol,” the House today is asked to vitiate a law and a process upon which the administration, the Congress and the people of Colombia have relied in good faith.

The alleged breach of manners? A claimed failure to consult the House on the agreement. But, as has been said, consultation has been extensive, and those consultations have had an impact. The Government of Colombia has done a great deal—more than some may have thought wise, in fact—to address Democratic concerns about human rights, labor organizing, and other issues.

It’s called “fast track authority” for a reason. No argument about process niceties can change the meaning of those words. There is supposed to be a deadline for a vote in this House. That’s the very point of the requirement we’re being asked to waive today.

In fact, the supposed failure to consult is just the latest pretext for the shameless politicization of free trade policy and the abandonment of a key ally. The perverse truth underlying the political battle lines over trade: This action would harm American interests at home and abroad. American workers would benefit from the provisions in this agreement as much or more than their Colombian brothers and sisters.

This free trade agreement would spark a tremendous increase in trade from the United States to Colombia. High quality American goods like machinery would be available at lower prices in Colombia. The agreement would therefore create jobs, spur investment, and improve our quality of life. The benefit is obvious, especially when compared to the minimal costs. Over 90 percent of Colombian goods already enter the U.S. tariff-free thanks to the recently renewed Andean Trade Preference Act, so we would be sacrificing very little.

There are still subtler yet equally vital reasons to approve the FTA. Colombia is a proud

democratic ally in Latin America. It is our closest friend in an area filled with nations opposed to our shared vision of harmonious relations. Colombia has also been beset by a dynamic Marxist insurgency, funded and scored by international drug trafficking and kidnapping. This movement has brought untold death, destruction, and other hardships to Colombia. In recent years, however, the tide has turned. Owing mostly to the steadfast determination of Colombians who seek peace, guided by the unwaveringly leadership of President Álvaro Uribe, and assisted by American funding and advice, the rebels are being defeated. I have been to Colombia many times, most recently in February, and I have seen first-hand the dramatic improvement in Colombia’s security situation. By growing and diversifying the Colombian economy, the free trade agreement would provide further incentive for guerillas to cease their quixotic quest for power while also demonstrating the benefits of free trade to those in neighboring countries whose leaders favor demagoguery while letting their economies fall behind.

Many Democratic leaders who oppose the agreement claim they do so because labor leaders are endangered in Colombia. This is an excuse, not a justification. I applaud the vitally important role played by Colombian labor officials. I unalterably oppose actual or threatened violence against them. More importantly, I know President Uribe agrees. His government has instituted widespread reforms to protect labor leaders and to promptly, efficiently, and legally respond to attacks against them. Since 2002, when President Uribe was inaugurated, violence directed at labor officials in Colombia has fallen 80 percent. These institutional changes and results are precisely what Democratic officials in the United States said would earn their support for the free trade agreement. But now the goal posts have been moved. Democratic leaders, beholden to union bigwigs, refuse to do the right thing. This sorry spectacle will further confirm the views of those who believe America’s image abroad is deteriorating.

Make no mistake about it, this action will effectively kill this agreement, despite empty claims to the contrary. Rather than ratify provisions which would significantly improve the economies of both the United States and Colombia and solidify relations with a key American ally, the Democratic leadership prefers to cravenly supplicate themselves to their political allies in Big Labor.

Colombia has done what was asked of it. Now, the Democrats who run Congress should opt to help their constituents and aide an important ally. Legislating, like elections, is about choices. And changing the rules, moving the goal line beyond reach, is the wrong choice on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1092.

It is with careful consideration that I have chosen to support this rule removing procedural timetables from House consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

A vote on this rule is not a vote on the substance or quality of the Colombia FTA. It is a vote in protest of the President’s failure to adequately consult the Congress under well-established protocols.

I was one of only a few members of my caucus to support trade promotion authority in

2002. It is my strong belief that forcing consideration of such measures is not the way "fast track" was intended to be utilized.

The President's actions place ultimate implementation of the Colombia FTA in great jeopardy. A failure of the FTA on the House floor would send the worst possible message to our friends and allies in Latin America.

I look forward to working with my colleagues here in Congress, as well as with the administration, to create the conditions for consideration of this important agreement on its own merits.

For too long, the United States has neglected its friends and allies in Latin America, and the Colombia FTA will be a beneficial tool for engagement in the region.

In the midst of growing peace and order in Colombia, removing trade barriers between our two countries will facilitate Colombia's progress and benefit both of our economies.

President Uribe and the Colombian people continue to face a number of challenges, including narco-trafficking and kidnapping by guerrilla groups, continued violence committed by armed paramilitaries, and the need to protect the rights of unions and their leaders. I have great confidence in his abilities, and I look forward to seeing continued progress in this regard.

I also look forward to seeing continued progress and bipartisan support for domestic economic measures, including additional funding to stimulate the economy, to provide support and training for workers, and to address housing, energy, and health care. I urge both President Bush and my colleagues to recommit themselves to these goals, in order to create favorable conditions for consideration of the Colombia FTA.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this irresponsible rule. The Colombia trade agreement was negotiated under trade promotion authority, which clearly specifies that once transmitted to Congress this body must take up the agreement within 90 days. The Government of Colombia negotiated this agreement with us in good faith, that we would keep our word. Unfortunately the majority now wants to change the rules of the game. This is damaging to our relationship with Colombia and damages our reputation in the world. It shows the world that Congress does not keep its word, and this will make any other country reluctant to enter into agreements with our nation. This is simply bad foreign policy.

I believe in the benefits of free and fair trade. I support efforts to remove tariffs and barriers to trade whenever possible and feel that such efforts will lead to increased economic growth for the nation as a whole. With tens of thousands of jobs in my congressional district being tied to trade, the expansion of trade means a healthy future for a number of local businesses, and in turn new jobs for my district, and the Nation.

However, I believe that all trade must be fair trade. The Colombian agreement would be fair trade. Already, the vast majority of Colombian products pay zero tariffs to enter the U.S. market. In fact 365 members of this House, many of whom now stand opposed to this fair trade bill, voted to allow Colombia this open access to our markets. It is not defensible to keep U.S. producers from the same access to Colombia, that Colombia already has to our market. Since 1991, U.S. workers and businesses

have paid over a billion dollars in tariffs to sell their wares in the Colombian market. Every day we delay enactment of the Colombia FTA we hurt U.S. workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs who will benefit from opening the Colombian market.

It is disappointing that the Democratic majority has not embraced this trade agreement, as it would mean new jobs for citizens across the nation. New jobs that are very much needed in our tightening economy. Mr. Speaker, I remain committed to the benefits of free and fair trade. I urge my colleagues to reject this rule which would be detrimental to our relationship with Colombia and is more importantly reckless foreign policy.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this resolution that President Bush has regrettably made necessary.

The immediate effect of the resolution will be to allow deferral of a vote on the proposed free trade agreement with Colombia.

Some say that the longer-term effect will be to make approval of that agreement impossible. But I think the reality could be just the reverse, because as you have said, Mr. Speaker, at this point the odds are against its approval and so deferring the vote on the agreement could be the only way it might ever be approved.

I have supported Free Trade Agreements with Bahrain, Singapore, Chile, Morocco, Australia, Jordan, Oman, and Peru, I'd like the opportunity to consider the merits of a Colombia FTA, but cannot jump to the conclusion that its provisions are fully acceptable, and I am troubled by allegations that labor organizers have been terrorized by government authorities in Colombia. It seems to me that the proponents of this agreement have the burden of making a compelling case that the agreement meets criteria Congress has insisted upon with regard to labor protections.

Therefore, deferring the vote will allow additional time for the Bush Administration and the other supporters of the agreement either to make the case that it should be approved in its current form or to work with the Colombian government and the Congress to make revisions to respond to objections raised by its opponents.

It should not have been necessary for the House to act to provide that time. If President Bush had been willing to do more to resolve those objections, we would not be taking such action. But by deciding to formally transmit the agreement, which set in motion the so-called "fast track" procedures of the current law applicable to trade agreements, the President has brought us to this point.

And while the details are different, that approach is very similar to the one the president has followed on many other matters—demanding approval of his proposals and refusing to work with Members of Congress to resolve objections or accommodate other suggestions.

We have seen the pattern over and over, from the repeated vetoes of legislation to expand the State Children's Health Program, SCHIP, to revising the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA, and with regard to many other matters than I have time to list.

But this time, by adopting this resolution, we can give President Bush time to reconsider that way of doing business, and give the other proponents of the Colombia trade agreement time to make the case for why it should be approved.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join you today in standing up for working families in America by opposing the flawed fast track procedures.

When the President sent the Colombia Trade Agreement to Congress earlier this week, he started a clock for the agreement's consideration. He hoped that by forcing Congress to act, he would be able to win approval of the Colombia FTA. Yet, in reality, he only exposed one of the many problems that fast track trade negotiation authority created.

Today, Congress is sending a clear message to the President that we will not consider the Colombia Free Trade Agreement or any other FTA's on his time table. We will not be bullied. Congress is a coequal branch of government.

As you may know, I have long opposed the granting of fast track authority to the President because it removed Congress from shaping and drafting trade agreements, the timing of their consideration, and allowed Congress only an up or down vote on unamendable trade agreements. In doing so Congress abdicated our essential responsibility to our nation's citizens. I was pleased that this dangerous fast track authority expired last summer and has not been renewed.

As I hear from people from across central New Jersey, protecting workers' rights, human rights, and the environment are not secondary or extraneous concerns; they are central to what the United States stands for. I support trade that elevates the quality of life for citizens all over the world. The United States, and indeed the entire world, can benefit from increased trade, but increased trade in itself is not the goal we seek. Rather, we seek an improved quality of life for our people and advancement of other people's well-being.

Additionally, even on the merits I am very concerned by the Colombian agreement. As I have said before, trade done right helps lift the global standard of living and works to protect our natural environment. Trade agreements are not just about goods and commodities, they are about values. Trade agreements state what constitutes acceptable behavior in worker's rights, environmental matters, intellectual property, and so forth. We should make sure we export the goods we produce and not the workers who produce them. We must continue to demand improvements in our trade policy.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 195, answered "present" 1, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 181]

YEAS—224

Abercrombie	Allen	Baca
Ackerman	Altmire	Baird
Aderholt	Arcuri	Baldwin

Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Foster
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Goode
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Herseht Sandlin

Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hookey
Hoyer
Inlee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Cohen
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tauscher
Taylor
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—195

Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Biggert
Billray
Bilirakis
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)

Brown-Waite,
Ginny
Buchanan
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David

Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Fox
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)

Gerlach
Gilchrest
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hill
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel
E.
Mack
Mahoney (FL)

Manzullo
Marchant
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCauley (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Muggrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher

Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancred
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Tanner

NOT VOTING—12

Andrews
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Burgess

Buyer
Ferguson
Granger
Hulshof

Larson (CT)
Ramstad
Rush
Sires

□ 1347

Mr. PENCE changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

Messrs. ORTIZ and ADERHOLT changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not present to vote on rollcall votes Nos. 178, 179, 180, and 181 due to a family medical matter. Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Yea" on rollcall vote No. 178 on the Journal vote; "yea" on rollcall vote No. 179 on agreeing to H. Res. 1083, providing for consideration of the bill H.R. 2537, Beach Protection Act of 2008; "yea" on rollcall vote No. 180 on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 1038, recognizing the fifth anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security and honoring the Department's employees for their extraordinary efforts and contributions to protect and secure our Nation; and "yea" on rollcall vote No. 181 on agreeing to H. Res. 1092, relating to the consideration of the bill H.R. 5274 to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2537.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

BEACH PROTECTION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1083 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2537.

□ 1404

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2537) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to beach monitoring, and for other purposes, with Ms. DEGETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2537, the Beach Protection Act of 2007. This legislation extends the authorization of appropriations for the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act, the BEACH Act, through 2012. First signed into law in October 2000, the BEACH Act has provided States, local governments and tribes vital funding for assessment and public notification programs that monitor our coastal waters.

Over the years, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment has held numerous hearings on EPA's BEACH program. In fact, the history of the BEACH Act goes back to 1990 when Congressman William Hughes of New Jersey first introduced the Beaches Environmental Assessment, Closure and Health Act of 1990. I applaud his vision for effective coastal water quality criteria and public notification, as well as the efforts of Congressman PALLONE and Congressman BISHOP, the primary sponsors of this legislation, to carry forward this legacy.

As reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Beach Protection Act of 2007 increases the annual authorization level for State and local monitoring and notification grants by \$10 million and expands the eligible uses for grants under