

## **Hare opposes yoking trade assistance, Colombia**

Press release submitted by Rep. Phil Hare  
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WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Phil Hare (D-IL), co-chair of the International Workers Rights Caucus and a member of the House Trade Working Group, today released the following statement regarding the possibility that the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) could be moved in tandem with legislation reforming the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA). The Senate Finance Committee is set to mark up its version of TAA tomorrow.

“I will fight tooth and nail against any effort to tie the flawed Colombia FTA to long overdue TAA reform.

“Let me be clear. I strongly support modernizing TAA. I voted for the House bill and lobbied for many of the provisions in it. My constituents fully understand the real life consequences when bad trade deals are combined with an inadequate safety net for displaced workers. I commend the Senate Finance Committee for scheduling a markup this week.

“But the completely unrelated Colombia FTA should remain dead. Trade unionists are being murdered at a rate of one per week in 2008. Yet few if any of the perpetrators are being brought to justice. America should have zero tolerance for this type of violence.

“Passing the Colombia agreement—based on the job-killing NAFTA model—would actually force more Americans into TAA while sending a terrible message about our commitment to basic human rights.

“What Congress should be moving is the TRADE Act— legislation that mandates a review of existing trade agreements and a renegotiation of those agreements if necessary. It also sets the terms of what must be included in future trade deals—including strong, enforceable labor and environmental standards.

“The American people are desperate for a new direction on trade—including a modernized TAA. The Colombia FTA simply continues the failed policies of the past. Tying the two measures together is a bad idea any way you cut it.”