

News From House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi
H-204, The Capitol, Washington D.C. 20515
<http://democraticleader.house.gov>

Friday, May 28, 2004

Contact: Brendan Daly/Jennifer Crider, 202-225-0100

Pelosi Statement in Opposition to CAFTA

Washington, D.C. -- House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi released the following statement today in opposition to the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) signed this morning by the Bush Administration:

"The Central American Free Trade Agreement that the Bush Administration signed today is a missed opportunity. We could have had an agreement that would have increased trade while protecting workers' rights and the environment, and I would have been proud to support such an agreement. But by turning its back on concerns expressed by Members of Congress of both parties, and by turning back the clock on labor and environmental standards, the Bush Administration has negotiated an agreement that has little chance of success.

"Trade agreements must respond to the specific circumstances in the countries with whom we are negotiating. The countries of Central America have inadequate, poorly-enforced labor and environmental laws that do not follow international standards. As such, enforcement in these areas must be written into CAFTA rather than just asking the countries to police themselves.

"The problems in this agreement are no surprise. From the moment President Bush and the Republicans in Congress took office, they have waged an all-out attack on American union workers and our environment. They have attempted to deny workers the right to full union representation, and have worked to reverse more than three decades of bipartisan progress on the environment.

"We must ensure that all trade agreements respect workers' rights, the environment, health, and human rights."

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