



Catholics for Faithful Citizenship

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Dear Member of Congress,

June 22nd, 2005

Trade agreements are more than economics. They are life issues that affect the human person's life and livelihood. As Catholics for Faithful Citizenship, we call upon Congress to examine both the life questions of CAFTA, and as the U.S. Bishops ask, to examine CAFTA in light of moral criteria. As we examine CAFTA it is evident because of the great disparities between countries in the areas of technology and science, the process of global trade agreements increase rather than decrease the inequalities between countries in the areas of social and economic development.

The poverty of billions of men and women is "the one issue that most challenges our human and Christian consciences."

--Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, 2000

CAFTA's extension of protections for intellectual property rights will limit the access of poor people to affordable medicines thus making it difficult for the 275,000 HIV infected people in the region to survive. CAFTA again works against a culture of life, as it affects the livelihoods of poor farmers in Central America who are unable to compete against highly subsidized U.S. agriculture. At the same time U.S. subsidies are not focused on the needs of small and medium-sized farms in the U.S. There is no clear protection in CAFTA for fundamental workers rights and protections for the environment. There is no transparency or democratic participation in regards to CAFTA with little information available and no voice for those who will be most affected. Trade policies should improve education, health care, and democratic participation, however CAFTA fails in all these areas of life.

The continuing deterioration in terms of the...gap between rich and poor countries has prompted the social Magisterium to point out the importance of ethical criteria that should form the basis of international economic relations: the pursuit of the common good and the universal destination of goods; equity in trade relationships; and attention to the rights and needs of the poor in policies concerning trade and international cooperation.

--Compendium, 364

Catholics for Faithful Citizenship ask that Congress evaluate CAFTA based on its failures regarding a culture of life and the moral issues it ignores. Members of Congress must ask themselves if indeed CAFTA supports a culture of life. If members take into consideration the lack provision for agriculture, workers rights, the environment, democratic participation, access to health care, human development, especially the poor, and no focus on the common good of all, the answer will be a resounding NO.

Sincerely,

Eric McFadden

President – Catholics for Faithful Citizenship