

**For Immediate Release:
July 28, 2005**

Contact: Chris Slevin (202) 454-5140

Statement of Lori Wallach on CAFTA Final Vote in the House of Representatives

The CAFTA vote became a highly politicized referendum on whether President Bush would be made a lame duck, but the CAFTA debate makes clear that a dramatic shift in U.S. trade politics has occurred and the NAFTA trade model is dead.

After losing the debate on the merits months ago, passing CAFTA required last minute procedural stunts even after weeks of the President's personal attention, a rare Presidential visit to Congress, months of GOP leadership threats and goodies and an army of corporate lobbyists to push the economically modest CAFTA NAFTA expansion through by a narrow margin after trying for a year.

That CAFTA NAFTA expansion, a trade deal of small economic significance, barely passed the House of Representatives shows that any economically significant attempts to expand the NAFTA model, such as the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the America, would be dead on arrival.

With only 15 Democrats supporting CAFTA, the Bush administration and Republican Party has now officially adopted NAFTA's record of an unsustainable deficit, downward pressure on wages and economic instability as their own. How U.S. trade politics has shifted was demonstrated by the CAFTA no votes of traditional free trade Democrats Jim Davis (D-FL) and Harold Ford (D-TN) who are both seeking statewide office in their states.

With a 214-211 vote, the GOP leadership held open the vote because all of the remaining GOP votes (Jo Ann Davis, Boustany, Capito, Fitzpatrick, Simmons, LaTourette, Jindal, and Taylor) were committed to oppose CAFTA - which would have brought opposition to a winning 219. The promised breaking of arms "into one-thousand pieces," as Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) stated, ensued with brokered final vote switching and threats which ended the vote at 217-215.