

**Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA)**  
**CAFTA Statement Following Ways and Means Committee Markup June 15, 2005**  
**For Immediate Release**

"For the past several months, I was willing to give the Administration and Republican majority the benefit of the doubt on CAFTA, but not any longer. Today in my role as a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over international agreements, I voted against CAFTA.

"Free trade was sacrificed today at the Republican altar of false hopes.

"The Republican majority on the Ways and Means Committee, in a mock markup, wholly adopted the President's flawed approach to international trade when they approved CAFTA after refusing all Democratic attempts to improve the agreement, especially for workers.

"I've said for some time that I had concerns that needed to be addressed, including workers' rights, environmental protection, and true free market trade. Recently, when the Republican chairman of the Ways and Means Committee hinted publicly that he wanted to improve CAFTA, especially provisions on workers' rights, I believed I was witnessing a good faith attempt to unite, not divide, the committee and the House.

"Today, we learned the Republican majority intends only to divide and conquer, removing any hint at protecting workers and retaining protectionist policies to benefit U.S. textile interests.

"As the biggest market in the world, United States trade policy is particularly important for developing countries. I have long supported liberalizing international trade in goods and services and continue to advocate for market liberalization today.

"We had a chance in CAFTA to lead the world into creating more and better family wage jobs, to hold ourselves up as a beacon of hope for furthering the economies of countries and fueling the dreams of a better life for people. Instead, the Republicans seeded Central America with their philosophy of the Haves and Have-nots.

"Today, the Republican majority voted to let the President tear the shirt off the backs of people throughout Central America. I won't be part of that."