

Teamsters Will Strongly Oppose Colombia Trade Agreement

Hoffa Says Bush Again Turns His Back On Workers

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(Washington, D.C.) – Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa said Monday he will strongly oppose the trade agreement with Colombia that the Bush administration is sending to Congress.

“This trade deal is an insult to every American who works for a living,” Hoffa said. “Workers are feeling the pain of the trade deals that began with NAFTA. They’ve been disasters.

“The Teamsters, the Change to Win federation and the entire labor movement will work tirelessly to defeat this job-killing trade deal that never should have been negotiated in the first place,” Hoffa said.

The proposed deal with Colombia is especially repugnant to U.S. labor unions as Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for union members.

More than 2,500 union members have been murdered by Colombian death squads since the 1980s. There have been more than 400 murders since President Uribe took office five years ago. Yet the Colombian government has done very little to effectively stop death squads from murdering workers for trying to form unions.

Congress will now have 90 legislative days to act on the Colombia trade deal. The Democratic leadership has made its position clear: Until the union killings in Colombia stop and the murderers are brought to justice, this deal should not be brought to Congress.

“Workers don’t need trade policies that kill jobs,” Hoffa said. “In Pennsylvania alone, 1,583 plants, offices and warehouses have closed since NAFTA took effect because of trade. These trade deals must be stopped.”

Hoffa is about to embark on a five-city tour of Pennsylvania to talk about jobs, the economy, the nation’s failed trade policies and Sen. Barack Obama’s positions on these and other issues affecting working families.

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

