

## Altmire Statement on Columbia Free Trade Agreement

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(Washington, DC) &mdash; U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today issued the following statement on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. President Bush sent this agreement to Capitol Hill on Monday, which forces the House and the Senate to vote on it in the next 90 legislative days.

&ldquo;It is unfortunate that the president is forcing a vote on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement when he still refuses to work with Congress to improve the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, a vital job retraining initiative for America&rsquo;s workers. It would be irresponsible to pass this trade agreement without first bolstering resources for workers here at home.

&ldquo;Pennsylvanians have seen firsthand how ill-conceived trade agreements can be devastating for our state&rsquo;s manufacturing industry. Under the Bush Administration, Pennsylvania has lost over 200,000 jobs, which is roughly one-fourth of our state&rsquo;s factory jobs. I do not see how the Colombia Free Trade Agreement would improve this situation.

&ldquo;Furthermore, Colombia&rsquo;s record of violence against union members is inhumane and violates basic human rights. Although I support the principals that govern free trade, I cannot support agreements drafted by the Bush Administration that show careless disregard for human rights and for America&rsquo;s workers.

&ldquo;I am committed to working for trade policies that put American workers first and benefit western Pennsylvania&rsquo;s economy and families. Unfortunately, the Colombia Free Trade Agreement falls short of this.&rdquo;