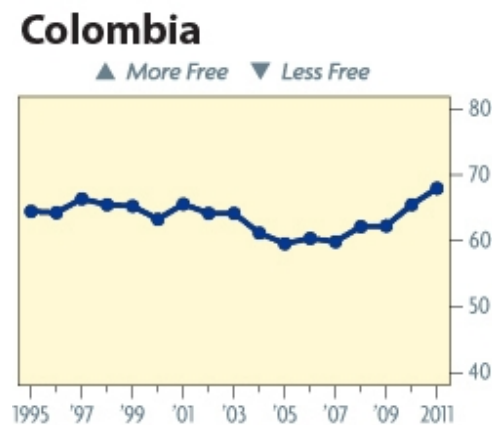


## Colombia's Stride Toward Greater Freedom

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Colombia has unmistakably made political and economic transformation over the past years.

As pointed out by Freedom House, in a world where authoritarianism is advancing and electoral democracy is unfortunately recoiling, Colombia has made notable improvements that make the country stand out against such a trend. Along with its free presidential election in 2010, the country has achieved [“an improved equilibrium between the three branches of government and the end of surveillance operations that had targeted both civil society and government figures.”](#)

Equally noteworthy is Colombia's continuing march toward greater economic freedom. As documented in The Heritage Foundation's *2011 Index of Economic Freedom*, a data-driven policy analysis of 179 economies around the world, Colombia's economic freedom is most improved in South America and is the 10th most improved in the world, with the country's economic freedom rising by [2.5 points](#) due to thriving reforms in business, investment, and labor regulations.

The interplay between economic freedom and political freedom is complex, but Colombia is clearly demonstrating that the two surely can advance together, complementing each other.

Colombia's Vice President, Angelino Garzón, who comes to Washington this week to meet with key U.S. officials, [notes](#):

Colombia has made significant advances in human rights in the past eight years. We are committed to being leaders in this area at the same time as we work to build the economy and provide opportunity for every Colombian who wishes to work.

It would be utterly irresponsible for Washington's policy makers to ignore Colombia's progress toward greater freedom. It is time to show America's staunch support for Colombia with the passage of the [U.S.–Colombia free trade agreement](#) without further delay.