



# Coalition of Service Industries

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CSI Supports Colombia FTA, Calls for Passage**

(Washington, DC) The Coalition of Service Industries (CSI) today again expressed its support for the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The Agreement will open up Colombia's market in a wide range of service industries, and includes important provisions for services-related investment, high standards of regulatory transparency, and provides a secure and predictable legal framework for US companies in the Colombian market.

"The service sector accounts for four-fifths of US private employment, and US economic output; agreements that open up foreign markets to US service providers are therefore essential to the continued growth and competitiveness of the U.S. economy," said Bob Vastine, President of CSI. The United States is the world's largest and most competitive service exporter, with private services exports reaching \$455 billion last year, and a trade surplus of \$123 billion. Every State in the Union exports services, and a large majority of the workforce in every Congressional district is employed in services.

In a [March 24 letter](#) to the leadership of the House of Representatives, CSI pointed out that the Agreement eliminates barriers to trade and investment across the full spectrum of services, in which US companies are extremely competitive. For example, it will open up the Colombian market for asset management and pension services, insurance services, express delivery services, audiovisual services, telecommunications services, IT services and others. The agreement will expand US services exports to Colombia, and will offer US companies the same access that Colombian companies currently enjoy in the US market.

The agreement also includes strong protections on labor rights, which will reinforce the progress that Colombia has made in recent years in addressing violence against labor leaders. Moreover, the agreement will strengthen the US relationship with a steadfast ally in a strategically important region.

"The agreement promotes US economic and commercial goals; it supports our human and labor rights objectives; and it serves US geostrategic interests in the region. For these reasons, we believe it unquestionably merits Congressional approval," said Vastine.

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The Coalition of Service Industries is the leading US business association representing companies across a broad spectrum of service sectors. CSI is dedicated to reducing barriers to US services exports and mobilizing support for domestic US policies which enhance the global competitiveness of its members. CSI was formed in 1982 to ensure that U.S. trade in services would become a central goal of U.S. trade policy and trade negotiations. It played a major role in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and in the advocacy effort leading to the 1997 World Trade Organization (WTO) Basic Telecommunications and Financial Services Agreements. CSI's knowledge of the process of services trade negotiations, its ties to the WTO and its network of relationships with governments and industry in other countries are unmatched. For a complete list of CSI members, visit our website at [www.uscsi.org](http://www.uscsi.org).