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4 **The American Legislative Exchange Council Urges Congress to Pass the Colombia Free**
5 **Trade**
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7 WHEREAS, President Bush transmitted to Congress implementing legislation for the United States-
8 Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on April 7, 2008;

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10 WHEREAS, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) policy on Free Trade acknowledges
11 “the imposition of artificial barriers to free and open trade...are deterrents to American economic
12 interests.”
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14 WHEREAS, the Colombia FTA will provide duty-free access to markets providing immediate
15 elimination of duties on 53 percent of current U.S trade;
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17 WHEREAS, the comprehensive free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia will
18 eliminate tariffs and barriers to goods and services, while promoting economic growth and stability to
19 the country of Colombia;
20

21 WHEREAS, Colombia is the longest standing democracy in South America and it is the strongest ally
22 to the United States in the region;
23

24 WHEREAS, over the past decade, the United States has appropriated over \$5 billion in aid to
25 Colombia to “battle violent insurgents and eradicate the production of illicit drugs;”
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27 WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA is designed to both strengthen civil society in Colombia and open
28 economic opportunities for U.S. producers;
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30 WHEREAS, the total trade for 2006 between the United States and Colombia was estimated at \$14.7
31 billion with imports accounting for \$8.7 billion and exports at \$6.04 billion;
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33 WHEREAS, since enactment of the Andean Trade Preferences Act of 1991, 90 percent of Colombia’s
34 exports already enter the United States duty free;
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36 WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA levels the playing field and enhances competition, moving the
37 United States-Colombia commercial relationship beyond a one-way preference to full partnership and
38 reciprocal commitments;
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40 WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA commits parties to effectively enforce their own domestic
41 environmental laws and adopt, maintain, and implement laws, regulations, and all other measures to
42 fulfill obligations under covered multilateral environmental agreements;
43

1 WHEREAS, the security situation has improved in Colombia significantly since 2000, with
2 kidnappings down by 76 percent, terror attacks down by 61 percent, and homicides down by 40
3 percent;

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5 WHEREAS, Colombia has proven itself worthy of America's support. In recent years, Colombia's
6 democratically-elected President has taken courageous steps to stop drug traffickers, rein in
7 paramilitary groups, and enforce the law;

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9 WHEREAS, thirty-nine trade unionists were killed in 2007, compared to a total of 197 trade unionists
10 in 2001, the year before Colombian President Uribe came to office;

11
12 WHEREAS, in 2007 prosecutors obtained 36 convictions for the murder of trade unionists, up from 11
13 in 2006, and only one in 2001;

14
15 WHEREAS, President Uribe has seen to an increase in the budget of the prosecutor general's office
16 every year since taking office, and last year, created a special unit to prosecute labor murders;

17
18 WHEREAS, Colombian President Uribe has worked to offer Colombians better alternatives to a life of
19 violence and drugs, including new jobs and economic opportunities that would come from a trade
20 agreement with the U.S.;

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22 WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA would be similar in value to free trade agreements already in
23 place with Chile and Peru;

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25 WHEREAS, with passage of the U.S. Colombia FTA, U.S. exports will increase by over \$1 billion;

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27 WHEREAS, approval of the U.S.-Colombia FTA will ensure that Colombia continues to make
28 progress in reducing violence while improving economic stability; and

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30 WHEREAS, the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators adopted a resolution supporting passage
31 of the U.S.-Colombia FTA in November 2007;

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33 WHEREAS, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives suspended the Trade Promotion
34 Authority (TPA) rules requiring that trade deals sent to Congress under TPA rules cannot be amended
35 and must be voted upon within 90 days;

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37 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ALEC calls on Congress to re-instate the TPA rules and
38 that Congress hold a Floor vote on the U.S.-Colombia FTA as it was negotiated under TPA

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ALEC call on Congress to pass and the President to sign
41 implementing legislation for the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement;

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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the President of the
44 United States, to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the U.S. Senate Finance and the U.S. House
45 Ways & Means Committees, to the U.S. Trade Representative, to the Secretary of Commerce, to the
46 Secretary of Labor, and to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

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48 *Adopted by the CIED Task Force May 16, 2008. Approved by the ALEC Board of Directors June 2008.*