



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

With the U.S. economy facing uncertain times, we need to work together to help the American people. Three months ago, we crafted an economic growth package to assist families and small businesses struggling with rising costs of living. The speed with which we were able to craft this deal underscores the fact that when both parties work together on behalf of the American people, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. While the rebate checks triggered by that economic growth package will soon be arriving in the American people's mailboxes, it is clear that our economy can still use a boost in other ways – particularly those that do not expand the size of the federal government at the long-term expense of American taxpayers.

With the focus on the need to create more American jobs and improve our economy, I was surprised and disappointed by your decision to block consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Since the House has already approved the Andean Trade Preferences, most Colombian goods enter the United States without taxes or tariffs, while American goods entering Colombia are heavily taxed. This is simply unfair to American workers and businesses. The Colombia Free Trade Agreement will level the playing field and help our economy by expanding our access to the Colombian market and creating more American jobs.

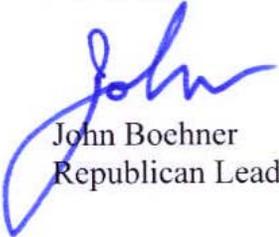
Despite your decision to block the vote, you noted in a news conference last week that you remain open to passing the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. I am encouraged by your statement and hope that, just as we did in January on the economic growth package, our parties and the Administration could work together to create more U.S. jobs and help our economy.

What is unclear, Madame Speaker, is your suggestion that the House won't consider the measure until you "leverage" action on other issues. The list of issues on which you indicated that you intend to use the "leverage" from blocking the Colombia Free Trade Agreement is both broad and vague, causing some to question whether you are simply using these demands as a pretext for blocking the trade agreement altogether. These questions are neither healthy for the institution of the House, nor for our nation's ability to negotiate future treaties with our international allies.

In the interest of supporting a key ally in South America, and helping American businesses expand and create jobs here in the United States, I respectfully request that you detail exactly what issues you want to see action on in order to bring the Colombia Free Trade Agreement to the House floor for a fair, straight up-or-down vote. This information will act as an important starting point for me, my House Republican colleagues, our counterparts in the Senate, and the Administration for us to begin discussions on moving the free trade agreement forward to its completion.

In order to begin our discussions as soon as possible, I request a response by next Tuesday, April 22. I look forward to working with you on this critical economic priority.

Sincerely,



John Boehner
Republican Leader