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**Please Join Me in Opposing the Oman FTA  
More of the Failed NAFTA Model & Worse**

Dear Colleagues,

This week, we will be voting on an Oman Free Trade Agreement (OFTA). I urge you to join me in opposing this deal. OFTA is identical to CAFTA, except where it is worse. Consider:

**LABOR RIGHTS:** OFTA has word-for-word the CAFTA labor rights provisions we opposed. OFTA's only requirement is for Oman to enforce its own laws. The only sanction is \$15 million annual-capped fine the Sultan would pay to himself. Keep in mind that Oman's labor laws are *worse* than those in CAFTA nations. Oman forbids independent unions. Only 'committees' managed by employers and government are allowed. With 70% of Oman's private sector workforce made up of foreign 'guestworkers,' only people with Arabic fluency can participate even in the fake unions. This means most workers would have no way to fight even the horrific sorts of abuses we learned from the recent *New York Times* expose were caused by the U.S.-Jordan FTA - a pact and a country with better labor standards.

Ways and Means Democrats worked for months to get fixes on Oman's laws that make a mockery of ILO standards. They sought to support OFTA. After months of hearing nothing could be done until October (after we voted), suddenly as the limited support for OFTA became clear, the Sultan issued a Decree last week. The Administration touted the Sultan's Decree as a big deal. In fact, it does not fix the issues I note above or 7 other severe issues listed by Ways and Means Democrats.

**NATIONAL SECURITY:** Do you think OFTA – by allowing the Chinese to set up sweatshop factories in Oman where indentured Pakistanis 'guest workers' would toil at slave-wages so Chinese firms can get duty free U.S. access for clothes imports – will *improve* the U.S. imagine? This scenario will send the wrong impression and perhaps generate greater hostility towards us.

**HOMELAND SECURITY:** Buried deep in an OFTA annex is an outlandish provision that threatens our ability to protect U.S. port security by creating a right for foreign firms to acquire and operate landside port activities *within* the United States. This means that if Congress tries to halt acquisition by any firm incorporated in Oman for 'operation and

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maintenance of docks; loading and unloading of vessels; marine cargo handling; operation and maintenance of piers; transfer of cargo between vessels and trucks, trains, pipelines...' the United States could be dragged before a U.N. or World Bank tribunal by a foreign firm demanding compensation with taxpayer dollars for the "future expected profits" they lost because we undermined their OFTA right to operate here!

Dubai Ports World would be able to take advantage of this provision by simply opening shop in Oman. OFTA supporters now say we should not worry because OFTA contains the standard "Essential Security" exception that can be raised as a defense during a foreign tribunal challenge. Do *you* want to explain to your constituents that you voted for a trade agreement that you *knew* limited your ability to ensure port security because you were relying on the *hope* that a foreign tribunal will agree our actions are excused by the Essential Security exception?

Please join me and oppose the Administration's seriously flawed Oman FTA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Collin C. Peterson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress