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Rep. Michaud Slams Colombia FTA Action Plan

WASHINGTON, DC – *Today, Representative Mike Michaud (ME-02), Chairman of the House Trade Working Group, issued the following statement after the White House released its fact sheets on the “U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement and Action Plan.”*

“I am appalled that the Administration is putting forward this action plan as the answer to Colombia’s rampant human rights and labor rights violations. While I support its objectives and some of the plan’s specifics, it is absurd to think that just passing a law or developing a plan will protect Colombians’ basic human and worker rights. Undoing decades of systemic violence and persecution in Colombia will take time. It will not happen just because more investigators have been hired or a new law is in place.

“Based on what I’ve read, this action plan is simply a way for the Administration to seek political cover as they push this flawed agreement. By issuing easy-to-reach benchmarks that focus only on unionist violence, the Administration will fail to address the grave issue of widespread human rights violations in Colombia. And without a mechanism for enforcing these benchmarks or a plan to maintain dialogue with victims in Colombia, this action plan will not be worth the paper it’s printed on.

“This is the opposite of what the President promised in his campaign, and it represents a slap in the face to millions of hardworking Americans. I look forward to reading the official text of the action plan, and I hope that it’s more substantial than the talking points put out today.”

On March 17th, Michaud joined with Representatives George Miller, Jim McGovern, Rosa DeLauro, Jan Schakowsky and Linda Sánchez in sending President Obama [a letter and memo](#) detailing benchmarks that the lawmakers see as necessary to meet before the United States considers ratifying a free trade agreement with Colombia.

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