



Pelosi Statement on House Removing Timetable from Consideration of Colombia Free Trade Agreement

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Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel held a news conference immediately following their Democratic Caucus meeting this morning. Below are the Speaker's opening remarks, on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement:

“Good morning. On Monday, I received a call from the President saying that he would be sending over the Colombia Free Trade Agreement to the Congress. I recommended against that course of action to the President, because I think we needed more time. I told the President that in light of the economic uncertainty in our country which has been going on for awhile, that the downturn is becoming more serious as evidenced by the jobless numbers on Friday and the statements by Fed Chairman Bernanke and now as recently as today, former Fed Chairman Greenspan.

“I was speaking on Monday that before we proceeded, we really had to continue our conversation about addressing the economic concerns of America’s working families. That many people were concerned about losing their jobs, many were concerned about losing their homes. But that was not most people. Almost everybody, though, was concerned about losing their standard of living. That their income, purchasing power, their income has gone down, while the cost of everything, all the necessities and the staples – groceries, gasoline, education, health care, housing costs, etc. – had gone up. It was about the cost of things. And I thought it would be important for us to continue conversations related to how we bring some balance to this issue.

“I thought there was a risk, the President sending it to the Congress now. If brought to the floor immediately, it would lose. And what message would that send? And so I thought there was everything to be gained about continuing our conversation. The President disagreed and sent it over yesterday. Today, I discussed with my caucus the prospect of a rule change that we will bring to the floor tomorrow.

“It’s not really a rule change; it’s sort of in keeping with the rules of the House. And that rule will say that we will remove the timetable from the consideration of the Colombia

Free Trade Agreement. It's keeping with how the rules of the House have governed how trade agreements have traditionally been brought to the floor under TPA.

“And what the President said Monday, and by his actions yesterday, was that he wanted to abandon any discussion protocols about how this could properly be brought to the floor. That’s one thing, but more importantly, was how we could properly address the concerns of America’s working families.

“We have the bills ready – there a number of things we could do – but the President chose not to do that. So we will choose tomorrow to remove the timeline from the consideration of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

“We’re first and foremost here to look out for the concerns of America’s working families. I take this action with deep respect to the people of Colombia and will be sure that any message they receive is one of respect for their country, and the importance of the friendship between our two countries.

“But the President took his action. I will take mine tomorrow.”