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## **Obama Just Flip-Flopped Right off the Trade Cliff; Congress Must Slam on the Brakes**

### *Statement of Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch*

By asking Congress to approve three NAFTA-style trade deals signed by former President George Bush, President Barack Obama has completely flip-flopped on his campaign promises to fix America's failed trade policy and has cast his lot against the majority of the American people who oppose more of these job-killing deals.

At a time of 9 percent unemployment and broad public opposition to more NAFTA-style trade agreements, it's a fairly shocking shift away from the president's job-creation message to suddenly call on Congress to pass three old Bush trade deals that the federal government's own studies say will increase the U.S. trade deficit.

The Korea FTA is the most economically significant since NAFTA, is projected to increase our trade deficit in key "jobs of the future" sectors such as computers, high-speed trains and solar, and result in the loss of an additional 159,000 U.S. jobs.

Congress should not even be considering a trade deal with Colombia, where scores of trade unionists, human rights defenders and Afro-Colombians are murdered or displaced from their lands every year and conditions have worsened since the administration signed off on an unenforceable "Labor Action Plan." At a time when America is trying to reduce the national debt, Congress should not be considering a trade deal with Panama, a notorious tax-haven where U.S. firms and wealthy individuals go to dodge their taxes.

These trade deals replicate the mistakes of the past, not the way to win the future, and thus pose serious policy and political perils. Poll after poll shows that the vast majority of the American public – across stunningly diverse demographics – is opposed to more of these NAFTA-style trade deals and that members of Congress vote for them at their peril. Even White House Chief of Staff Bill Daley, whose job it is to sell these trade deals and who helped former President Bill Clinton sell NAFTA to a skeptical Congress, recognized that workers "lose from these agreements," and implied that campaigning against free trade agreements could even be an electoral advantage. ("White House's Daley seeks balance in outreach meeting with manufacturers," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2011).

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