

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02), Ranking Member on the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee, today issued the following statement after the President announced that he will submit the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement to Congress:

“The Colombia agreement deserves a fair up-or-down vote in Congress. It would level the playing field for U.S. producers by opening the Colombian market to our goods and services, creating jobs for American workers, and promoting growth for our economy at a critical time. It would be fundamentally unfair to turn our backs on our U.S. workforce by rejecting this agreement. It would be wrong for any Member to seek to deny the opportunity for a vote by using procedural tactics to change the rules for the agreement’s consideration.

“I support the President's decision to send the agreement to Congress. It was signed almost a year and a half ago, and since then Congressional Democrats, Republicans, and the Administration agreed on the inclusion of new labor and environment conditions that have been implemented by Colombia. The implementing bill now enables Congress to have a frank and open debate for several months about the benefits of this agreement to America's economy and workers and the severe consequences to Colombia of failing to pass it.

“When I was recently in Colombia, I saw first-hand the impressive strides the Uribe government has made to combat narco-terrorism, reduce all violence, enforce the rule of law, and foster a strong economy. Protecting labor union members continues to be a top priority, and the government continues to fund prosecutors, investigators, and judges to catch and prosecute those who commit violence against union members.

“Such progress from such an important South American ally deserves to be rewarded with a vote on the agreement's merits on the floor of the House of Representatives. Turning our back on Colombia would send exactly the wrong signal to other nations in the region.”