



Washington, DC—Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed three free trade agreements with Colombia, South Korea and Panama. Negotiated originally during the Bush administration, the Obama administration made changes to the original agreements. These changes include higher standards for local composition of automobiles and further efforts to hold trading partners to better global labor standards.

Despite the improvements to the initial agreements, Congressman Olver found that only the Panama Free Trade Agreement had been adequately modified. Pervasive problems regarding the right of laborers to organize, violence toward union leaders, the potential for American manufacturing job loss, and concern for environmental degradation, led Congressman Olver to vote against the Colombia and South Korea agreements.

“Trade agreements are not only opportunities for economic improvement, but also a chance to better foreign labor standards and environmental practices,” said Congressman John Olver. “With regard to these three free trade agreements, I felt that only one of them satisfied that criteria,” Olver added.

Following passage in the House, the Colombia, South Korea, and Panama Free Trade Agreements were passed by the Senate and now await signature on the President’s desk.

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