

CAFTA: Flawed Trade Agreement Would Hurt Working Families

Working families oppose CAFTA. They know it is another flawed trade deal that will sell out America's jobs—and CAFTA will not do anything to pull people out of poverty in Central America.

CAFTA is the Wal-Mart of trade deals. Big corporations get all the breaks while workers' rights and wages are forsaken. The environment will be dumped on and factories here at home will shut down.

CAFTA is just like NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement)—a failure. NAFTA has not delivered the promised reductions in poverty and inequality in Mexico. The United States lost close to 1 million jobs due to NAFTA trade deficits.

Free trade, under these rules, has devastated our communities as companies close or export their jobs while millions of skilled workers cannot find living wage work. Right now, we are losing jobs in every sector that is open to trade competition, from lumber to aerospace to clothing. You name it: we've lost it and CAFTA won't bring it back.

CAFTA won't solve Central America's poverty problems.

Poverty in Central America is an important issue that needs real solutions. But CAFTA is about making corporations richer, not workers.

Forty percent of Central America's workers earn less than \$2 a day and workers' rights are routinely abused. CAFTA requires that countries only enforce their current labor laws, but Central America needs to fix and update its broken workplace rules to bring them up to suitable standards. Under the CAFTA system, multinational corporations will further their race to the bottom on wages and workplace protections.

CAFTA is devoid of compassion and opportunity for those who need it the most—the 37 million Central Americans struggling in poverty and the millions of immigrant workers in this nation most vulnerable to exploitation and layoffs.

NAFTA didn't work for workers in Mexico or the United States and neither will CAFTA.

NAFTA did not deliver reductions in poverty and inequality in Mexico. Millions of small Mexican farmers have been displaced and real wages for factory workers have fallen over the past 11 years. Poverty in Mexico is increasing.

The U.S. lost 900,000 jobs and job opportunities due to NAFTA. Real wages in the United States dropped last year.

Opposition to CAFTA is growing. The more Americans find out about it, the less they like it.

CAFTA is NAFTA's twin brother, which is why tens of thousands of workers, farmers and religious leaders have protested it.

The relief group Doctors Without Borders has protested CAFTA, saying it will make it more difficult for impoverished Central Americans to have access to generic, life-savings medicines.

The public is increasingly dissatisfied with the failed trade model that CAFTA replicates. Polls show that America's working families feel NAFTA was bad for the United States and they want worker and environmental protections included in trade deals.

State-level farm organizations oppose CAFTA, too. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture passed a resolution against CAFTA because farm products aren't adequately protected by the agreement.

We need FAIR trade with Central America.

The U.S. Congress should reject CAFTA so we can work on just and sustainable economic relationships with Central America.

Many members of Congress already oppose CAFTA. Its prospects for passage this year are dim. We're reaching out to all members, regardless of party, to let them know CAFTA is bad policy. It's bad for the country. And it is particularly bad for workers on all sides of the border.

The Americas need urgent and aggressive policy solutions for poverty, inequality and loss of good jobs. Let's start with reformed trade, tax, health

care and retirement security policies that allow American businesses and workers to compete and survive in the global economy.

For the sake of Americans throughout our hemisphere, we need to reject CAFTA. We must have a vision of trade that makes moral and economic sense for all workers.