

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Hilda Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Ron Kirk
Ambassador
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Secretary Solis and Ambassador Kirk:

As you know, central to the discussion of consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has been concerns about the ability of Colombian workers to safely collectively organize for fair wages, hours, and working conditions. Furthermore, many of us have remaining concerns about violence against labor leaders, and impunity associated with it, in Colombia. Although we recognize that substantial strides have been made in recent years to provide Colombian workers with greater rights and protections, it would be unacceptable if the conditions in Colombia were to worsen after the FTA goes into force. While we applaud the administration's successful effort to conclude the Colombian Action Plan Related to Labor Rights (the Plan), for our economic and political relationship with Colombia to continue to strengthen, it is vital that Congress receive regular, formal updates from the administration to understand how Colombia complies with the commitments it made in the Plan.

The government of Colombia made a number of commitments aimed to provide Colombian workers with rights that conform to international labor norms, and they made a variety of other commitments that seek to strengthen the rule of law in order to combat labor unionist killings and holding the perpetrators of violence accountable. While we believe it helpful that the Plan includes technical reviews between senior government officials in the U.S. and Colombia about implementation of the Plan, we believe it important that Congress have a thorough understanding of how Colombia is adhering to the commitments of the Plan. We urge you to provide the Congress, beginning in February 2012 and lasting for no less than 10 years, annual, formal reports that detail Colombia's compliance with the Plan and its specific impacts, to the extent practicable, on labor rights, violence, and impunity. We look forward to your timely response to our request.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden



Ben Cardin



Robert Menendez



Debbie Stabenow