

Michaud Condemns USTR's Remarks on Panama and Colombia Free Trade Agreements

Thursday, April 23 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud, Co-Founder of the House Trade Working Group, spoke on the House floor in opposition to USTR Ron Kirk's recent comments that the administration plans to push forward with the Panama Free Trade Agreement (FTA). "USTR Ron Kirk said this week that the administration wants to move the Bush-negotiated Panama and Colombia FTAs 'sooner rather than later.' This is absolutely outrageous and a serious mistake.

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"Why would we be moving forward on a trade agreement negotiated by President Bush during a time when our economy is struggling? This makes no sense whatsoever. It does not represent a new model on trade. It represents a recycled model that doesn't work.

"At home, people are furious about these trade agreements. During an economic downturn, do we really want to pass Bush-negotiated free trade agreements? I believe the American people deserve more. I believe they demand more from their elected officials.

"We have an historic opportunity with a new administration to reset the course on trade policy. I look forward to working with the administration to change that course."

The House Trade Working Group (HTWG) is a group of Members of Congress who advocate for fair trade deals. On February 26, 2009, Michaud sent a letter signed by 54 of his colleagues to President Obama outlining a new American trade and globalization agenda that could produce the benefits of expanded trade while remedying the considerable problems of past approaches. The letter described an array of policies that Congress and President Obama could work together on to move a new trade agenda forward.

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