

Washington, D.C. - Today, Representative David Price (NC-04) stood with President Obama and voted in favor of the free trade agreements the President has called on Congress to pass to boost the economy and create jobs. Rep. Price released the following statement:

I will stand with President Obama and support his efforts to expand fair trade because they will make our economy stronger, create jobs by providing new markets for goods made in North Carolina's Fourth District, and protect our workers from unfair trade practices. For as long as I have been in office, my approach to trade policy has been guided by my conviction that American industry can compete with any country in the world and win when given a truly level playing field.

One need to look no further than North Carolina's record of research and innovation to see the positive economic impact of trade. The cutting-edge industries that have transformed our state into a global leader in science and technology, creating hundreds of thousands of well paying jobs along the way, have depended on access to international markets for their success. Many of our state's traditional industries, from agriculture to auto parts, have also been able to adapt and thrive in the global economy. President Obama is right to see expanding opportunities for our workers by opening new markets as a critical part of Winning the Future.

Further, our workers will not have the opportunity to out-innovate and out-build our international competitors if we cede international markets to countries that engage in unfair trade. By signing these trade agreements we secure a promise that Colombian, Panamanian, and South Korean corporations will not use unfair trade practices to undermine our workers. This creates the level playing field where American workers thrive. And, leveling the play field for our goods will help U.S. manufacturers boost our exports, reaching President Obama's goal of doubling exports within five years, and protecting good paying jobs for working families.

Where there's unfair trade, we should stand against it. North Carolina provides a cautionary tale about the costs of reducing trade barriers with countries that do not abide by the same standards we require of our own businesses, as well as the necessity of ensuring that workers impacted by free trade have the support they need to transfer their skills to new vocations. For this reason, I made extending Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) to displaced workers a precondition for my support of these agreements.

I hope Congress will act soon to address the unfair trade practices that are undercutting jobs in North Carolina. I am currently cosponsoring a bill to make it easier to investigate allegations of currency cheating by China and other countries and impose tariffs on the country's imports if it is found guilty of currency cheating. Our manufacturing and textile industries have been hammered by China's unfair trade practices and the sweatshops of Southeast Asia. The United States does not have a free trade agreement with China nor with many of the low-wage countries in Southeast Asia, so these abuses continue unabated as a much greater threat to jobs in our state than any trade agreement we consider today. House GOP leaders are blocking consideration of the China Currency bill—thwarting the will of the majority of House members and the American people. We should stand with American workers, not countries that engage in cheating trade schemes.

I weigh each trade agreement that comes before the House carefully, based on how I think it will affect the Fourth District, North Carolina, the United States and our trading partners. Along with the majority of Democratic members of Congress, I have opposed inadequate and potentially damaging trade packages in the past. I voted against the Central American Free Trade Agreement, or CAFTA, and also opposed the renewal of "fast track" Trade Promotion Authority for President Bush. When the Bush Administration first proposed free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea that lacked tough labor and environmental standards, I made it clear that unless these standards were included, and TAA passed as well, I would also oppose these agreements. The agreements President Obama negotiated and asked me to support have largely addressed these demands.

Finally, I have worked personally with both the Colombian government and the U.S. Trade Representative to help improve the Colombian labor environment, and I am encouraged by the Labor Action Plan agreed to between the Obama and Santos Administrations. This was another condition of my support: that Columbia undertake prosecutions and move decisively against violence against union organizers. The President deserves credit for responding to House Democrats who encouraged him to craft a Labor Action Plan that holds the Colombian government accountable for further progress on this issue. This is an important achievement, because I am convinced that democracies are made stronger when they extend the right of union membership to their citizens.

Rep. Price also gave a statement for the record on the Columbia Free Trade Agreement. That statement is available online [here](#).

###

PRICE STANDS WITH OBAMA EFFORTS TO BOOST ECONOMY

October 12, 2011
