

Teamsters Praise NCSL for Rejecting Colombia Trade Deal

Hoffa Says U.S. Should Not Deal With Government
Linked to Death Squads

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(Washington, D.C.) –Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa applauded the National Conference of State Legislatures for rejecting a resolution of support for the Colombia FTA.

The NCSL, in Washington for its Spring Forum, on Friday voted down a resolution in support of the Colombia FTA.

“I don’t see how state leaders could support a deal with a government linked to right-wing death squads,” Hoffa said. “One out of every 10 of Colombia’s 268 federal lawmakers is in jail. One out of every 10, including the Senate’s president, is being investigated. Many of those are from President Alvaro Uribe’s own party.”

Just three days ago, President Uribe’s family member and political ally was arrested for supporting paramilitaries that kill trade unionists.

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist. More than 2,500 have been murdered. It is extremely rare for their killers to be brought to justice.

“Even if you ignore Colombia’s horrible human rights record, this deal should never have been negotiated,” Hoffa said. “It’s just a series of giveaways to multinational corporations and incentives to send American jobs overseas.”

“This vote shows that state leaders are in touch with the problems American workers face because of these so-called “free trade agreements,” Hoffa said.

The House of Representatives voted to shelve the deal with Colombia by removing it from fast track rules. However, the Bush administration has said it is willing to negotiate to bring the deal to the floor.

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.