

## Eshoo Opposes Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, issued the following statement after voting against H.R. 3045, the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

"Tonight I reluctantly voted against the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). I have not come to this decision easily. I'm a strong supporter of free trade, and I have voted for every free trade agreement that has come before the House of Representatives since I was first elected. I believe the American people benefit when we reach out to the billions of consumers around the world who want to purchase our goods and benefit from our creativity and ideas.

"CAFTA could have been a trade pact that would pass the House and Senate with broad bipartisan support, however, the Administration chose to ignore bipartisan concerns of Congress as negotiations were conducted. In earlier agreements with Australia, Jordan, and Morocco the Administration collaborated with Members of Congress from both parties and passage of these treaties was secured with large bipartisan majorities. With CAFTA, the Administration chose to go it alone and ignore advice from Congress, the body our Constitution gives the responsibility to govern foreign commerce.

"While the impact of CAFTA on American exporters, workers, or consumers is likely to be very limited, with more than 80% of imports from Central America already entering the U.S. duty free, and the six CAFTA countries representing only 1.5% of U.S. foreign trade, it is in the negotiated language of the Agreement that something large and unsettling looms.

"While American jobs and the jobs of my constituents are always of great concern to me, I believe the most significant impact of this agreement is likely to be in the Central American and Dominican workplace. These are developing countries that need meaningful safeguards in the workplace so that exploitation and abuse by exporters with an eye on the lucrative American market will not be the order of the day.

"In the 21st Century, we can do much better, in fact we must. Fragile democracies, home to grinding poverty, require the best ideas to build a middle class. The mark of a thriving democracy is a thriving middle class.

"This Agreement reflects the past rather than the future. To build a middle class, equal emphasis should be placed on the full protection of intellectual property as well as the workplace. CAFTA fails this standard.

"As I cast this vote, I will disappoint some and gladden others. The interests of our great nation and those that aspire to be great could have been advanced, but in my estimation, they are not. It is a missed opportunity for a strong bipartisan agreement that would export our products as well as the democratic values which have built a nation that is the envy of the world."

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