



The National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community.

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The Hispanic National Bar Association Strongly Urges Passage of the CAFTA-DR.

On May 28, 2004, the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The Dominican Republic (DR) joined CAFTA on August 5, 2004. The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) strongly supports congressional passage of CAFTA-DR.

The CAFTA-DR would have immediate positive trade benefits for U.S. producers, workers and consumers. Upon the Agreement's entry into effect, more than eighty percent (80%) of U.S. industrial exports to the six countries will become eligible for duty free treatment. In addition, the Agreement will dismantle trade impediments to U.S. services and service providers. The export promotion aspect of the CAFTA-DR will create new job opportunities for U.S. workers and the resulting economic development in Central America and the Dominican Republic will help bring prosperity to the region.

HNBA, President, Alan Varela, noted that "the CAFTA-DR has the potential to promote strong labor and environmental protections consistent with standards outlined by Congress in the Trade Act of 2002. Furthermore, CAFTA-DR helps foster transparency and enhances the rule of law in Central America and the Caribbean, and proactive outreach to our neighbors in this regard is imperative at this juncture. We support CAFTA-DR to the degree that it provides our neighbors with sustainable economic development, environmental protection mechanisms, and enhanced job security for workers in the United States and other participating nations."

"CAFTA-DR is vital to signaling continued U.S. support for our friends in the region and the hemisphere," said Juan Carlos Iturregui, HNBA Federal Affairs Liaison. "The trade agreement will expand trade opportunities and stimulate economic growth and development in a vital region for the United States, and can be a win-win for all stakeholders," added Iturregui.

The HNBA is a non-profit, national association that represents the interests of over 27,000 Hispanic American attorneys, judges, law professors, law students and legal professionals. Its continuing mission is: To improve the study, practice, and administration of justice for all Americans by ensuring the meaningful participation of Hispanic American legal professionals.