

ALEC EXPOSED

"ALEC" has long been a secretive collaboration between Big Business and "conservative" politicians. Behind closed doors, they ghostwrite "model" bills to be introduced in state capitols across the country. This agenda-underwritten by global corporations-- includes major tax loopholes for big industries and the super rich, proposals to offshore U.S. jobs and gut minimum wage, and efforts to weaken public health, safety, and environmental protections. Although many of these bills have become law, until now, their origin has been largely unknown. With ALEC EXPOSED, the Center for Media and Democracy hopes more Americans will study the bills to understand the depth and breadth of how big corporations are changing the legal rules and undermining democracy across the nation.

DID YOU KNOW? Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as "equals" in "unison" with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has "a VOICE and a VOTE," according to newly exposed documents. DO YOU?

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Resolution Urging Congress to Pass the Colombia Free Trade Agreement

Did you know that Reynolds American-- one of the biggest tobacco companies in the world-- was the corporate co-chair in 2011?

WHEREAS, President Bush transmitted to Congress implementing legislation for the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on April 7, 2008;

WHEREAS, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) policy on Free Trade acknowledges "the imposition of artificial barriers to free and open trade...are deterrents to American economic interests."

WHEREAS, the Colombia FTA will provide duty-free access to markets providing immediate elimination of duties on 53 percent of current U.S trade;

WHEREAS, the comprehensive free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia will eliminate tariffs and barriers to goods and services, while promoting economic growth and stability to the country of Colombia;

WHEREAS, Colombia is the longest standing democracy in South America and it is the strongest ally to the United States in the region;

WHEREAS, over the past decade, the United States has appropriated over \$5 billion in aid to Colombia to "battle violent insurgents and eradicate the production of illicit drugs;"

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA is designed to both strengthen civil society in Colombia and open economic opportunities for U.S. producers;

WHEREAS, the total trade for 2006 between the United States and Colombia was estimated at \$14.7 billion with imports accounting for \$8.7 billion and exports at \$6.04 billion;

WHEREAS, since enactment of the Andean Trade Preferences Act of 1991, 90 percent of Colombia's exports already enter the United States duty free;

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA levels the playing field and enhances competition, moving the United States-Colombia commercial relationship beyond a one-way preference to full partnership and reciprocal commitments;

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA commits parties to effectively enforce their own domestic environmental laws and adopt, maintain, and implement laws, regulations, and all other measures to fulfill obligations under covered multilateral environmental agreements;

WHEREAS, the security situation has improved in Colombia significantly since 2000, with kidnappings down by 76 percent, terror attacks down by 61 percent, and homicides down by 40 percent;

WHEREAS, Colombia has proven itself worthy of America's support. In recent years, Colombia's democratically-elected President has taken courageous steps to stop drug traffickers, rein in paramilitary groups, and enforce the law;

WHEREAS, thirty-nine trade unionists were killed in 2007, compared to a total of 197 trade unionists in 2001, the year before Colombian President Uribe came to office;

WHEREAS, in 2007 prosecutors obtained 36 convictions for the murder of trade unionists, up from 11 in 2006, and only one in 2001;

WHEREAS, President Uribe has seen to an increase in the budget of the prosecutor general's office every year since taking office, and last year, created a special unit to prosecute labor murders;

WHEREAS, Colombian President Uribe has worked to offer Colombians better alternatives to a life of violence and drugs, including new jobs and economic opportunities that would come from a trade agreement with the U.S.;

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Colombia FTA would be similar in value to free trade agreements already in place with Chile and Peru;

WHEREAS, with passage of the U.S. Colombia FTA, U.S. exports will increase by over \$1 billion;

WHEREAS, approval of the U.S.-Colombia FTA will ensure that Colombia continues to

ALEC's Corporate Board

--in recent past or present

- AT&T Services, Inc.
• centerpoint360
• UPS
• Bayer Corporation
• GlaxoSmithKline
• Energy Future Holdings
• Johnson & Johnson
• Coca-Cola Company
• PhRMA
• Kraft Foods, Inc.
• Coca-Cola Co.
• Pfizer Inc.
• Reed Elsevier, Inc.
• DIAGEO
• Peabody Energy
• Intuit, Inc.
• Koch Industries, Inc.
• ExxonMobil
• Verizon
• Reynolds American Inc.
• Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
• Salt River Project
• Altria Client Services, Inc.
• American Bail Coalition
• State Farm Insurance

For more on these corporations, search at www.SourceWatch.org.

make progress in reducing violence while improving economic stability; and

WHEREAS, the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators adopted a resolution supporting passage of the U.S.-Colombia FTA in November 2007;

WHEREAS, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives suspended the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) rules requiring that trade deals sent to Congress under TPA rules cannot be amended and must be voted upon within 90 days;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ALEC calls on Congress to re-instate the TPA rules and that Congress hold a Floor vote on the U.S.-Colombia FTA as it was negotiated under TPA

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ALEC call on Congress to pass and the President to sign implementing legislation for the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the U.S. Senate Finance and the U.S. House Ways & Means Committees, to the U.S. Trade Representative, to the Secretary of Commerce, to the Secretary of Labor, and to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

*Adopted by the CIED Task Force at the Spring Task Force Summit, May 16, 2008.
Approved by the ALEC Board of Directors June 2008.*

About Us and ALEC EXPOSED. The Center for Media and Democracy reports on corporate spin and government propaganda. We are located in Madison, Wisconsin, and publish www.PRWatch.org, www.SourceWatch.org, and now www.ALECExposed.org. For more information contact: editor@prwatch.org or 608-260-9713.

Center for Media and Democracy's quick summary

From its 1998 resolution in support of "Fast Track" Trade Promotion Authority-- which was used to push a permanent normal trading relationship with China through Congress in 2000 with little discussion or debate-- to more recent resolutions in support of the proposed Colombia, Panama and Korea Free Trade Agreements, ALEC has consistently urged its members to support a radical "free trade" agenda. This free trade agenda has cost America millions of jobs as factories closed and moved overseas in search of cheaper labor. Since 2001, an estimated 2.4 million American jobs have been lost to China alone. Now a diverse array of service sector jobs, from accounting and tax preparation to health care and credit card servicing, are being off-shored under these agreements. Such free trade agreements also allow public health, consumer, environmental and worker safety rules to be challenged as "barriers to trade" in trade tribunals that operate outside the constraints of U.S. law.

ALEC has also been a major promoter of the U.S. tobacco industry, which seeks to hook new generations of smokers on their products around the world. Reynolds Tobacco is the corporate co-chair of the International Relations Task Force of ALEC. ALEC has a trade resolution specifically targeting the European Union ban on Snus, a moist tobacco product often marketed to the young with fruit flavors. Reynolds produces Camel Snus in four flavors and is not happy that this dangerous product is banned in most of Europe. Note that ALEC maintains a list of "International Delegates," which are elected government officials around the world.