

July 25, 2005

Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader  
Honorable Steny H. Hoyer, House Minority Whip  
Honorable Rahm Emanuel, Chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee  
Honorable Mike Thompson, Chairman, DCCC Frontline

Dear Representatives Pelosi, Hoyer, Emanuel and Thompson,

The American labor movement has been one of the Democratic Party's most consistent and stalwart supporters. Every election cycle, the party depends upon labor for money, manpower and expertise. And every election cycle labor delivers.

This week, Congress will vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), an issue that all of labor vehemently opposes. Regrettably, several Democrats will vote to support CAFTA.

We recognize that the party and House Democrats are not homogeneous, that every member has a right to vote his or her conscience on all issues, including CAFTA.

But this letter is to make it clear that we find it both objectionable and unacceptable that Leadership and the DCCC are pushing the Federation and individual affiliates to support vulnerable incumbents -- the so-called "Frontline Candidates," and some of these members are poised to desert labor on this core issue.

To do our part, a number of unions proudly hosted an event last week for the Frontline Candidates. Several General Presidents and dozens of union staff gathered for an afternoon of skeet and trap shooting and raised almost \$300,000 for the Frontline.

This week, three of those members who benefited from labor's substantial support, Melissa Bean (IL), Jim Matheson (UT) and Dennis Moore (KS), are either undecided on how they will vote on CAFTA or are leaning in the direction of supporting it.

We expect that House Democratic Leadership will convey very strongly to all wavering Democrats, and particularly to Frontline Candidates, that voting for CAFTA against our strong, clear, and loud objections, would signal to the labor movement that those Frontline Candidates do not want our support.

Our work to help elect at-risk members, at your urging, will not extend to those who vote against us on this issue. As such, we hope that you will also convey to them that we believe those who receive our support have an obligation to vote with us on CAFTA.

Further, we ask that the DCCC remove from Frontline status any member who votes wrong on CAFTA.

Simply put, there must be real and measurable consequences for opposing labor on this issue. The stakes are too high for the workers of America. We cannot and we will not give any Democrat a pass on CAFTA.

Finally, while we appreciate your individual and collective efforts in opposing CAFTA, we are disheartened that a decision was made not to formally engage the whip operation in defeating this bad legislation. That decision has led us to grudgingly admire the majority for their resolute commitment to rewarding their core constituencies on seminal issues. Unfortunately, it seems that, at times, the Democratic Party fails to recognize its obligation to stand united with its allies when we need you most.

Partnership is a two way street.

Respectfully,

Harold A. Schaitberger, General President  
International Association of Fire Fighters

Gerald McEntee, President  
American Federation of State, County and  
Municipal Employees

Edward McElroy, President  
American Federation of Teachers

Edward C. Sullivan, President  
Building and Construction Trades Department

Joseph Hunt, General President  
International Association of Bridge, Structural,  
Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers

R. Thomas Buffenbarger, President  
International Association of Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers

Newton Jones, International President  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship  
Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers

Edwin Hill, President  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

James P. Hoffa, President  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

James Williams, General President  
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades  
of the United States and Canada

Michael Sacco, President  
Seafarers International Union of North America

Andrew Stern, President  
Service Employees International Union

Michael J. Sullivan, General President  
Sheet Metal Workers International Union

Robert Scardelletti, President  
Transportation-Communications International Union

Bruce Raynor, President  
UNITE-HERE

William Hite, General President  
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices  
of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the  
United States and Canada

Ron Gettelfinger, President  
United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural  
Implement Workers of America International Union

Joseph Hansen, President  
United Food and Commercial Workers  
International Union

Leo W. Gerard, President  
United Steelworkers of America

Terence O'Sullivan, General President  
Laborer's International Union of North America