

06 September 2005

Dominican Republic Approves U.S.-Central America Free Trade Pact

U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman offers congratulations

U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman has congratulated the government of the Dominican Republic for its September 6 approval -- by "an overwhelming margin" -- of a free-trade agreement with the United States and Central America.

By a vote of 118 to 4 on September 6, the Dominican Republic's Chamber of Deputies approved the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR).

The agreement now goes to President Leonel Fernandez, who has indicated that he will sign it.

In a statement issued that day, Portman offered his congratulations and indicated that the United States will be coordinating the implementation of the accord with CAFTA-DR signatory countries in the next few weeks.

The Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the United States have now approved CAFTA-DR. Nicaragua and Costa Rica -- the other two signatory countries -- have not, thus far.

For additional information, see [Central America Free Trade Agreement-Dominican Republic - US Department of State](#).

Following is the text of Portman's statement:

(begin text)

OFFICE OF THE U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 6, 2005

U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman Statement Regarding
Dominican Republic's Passage of CAFTA-DR

"We congratulate the Dominican Republic government for passing the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement by an overwhelming margin.

"They now join in approving the CAFTA-DR.

"We will be coordinating with the CAFTA governments over the next few weeks to determine when to put the agreement into effect.

"CAFTA-DR offers more than free trade. It offers new hope for easing poverty, fostering development, and strengthening democracy. It is about strengthening the rule of law and improving transparency to counter corruption.

"This agreement levels the playing field for American workers, farmers and businesses, expands choices for consumers and strengthens democracies in our neighborhood."

(end text)

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