

Occupy Wall Street

Media Advisory/Photo Opportunity

For Immediate Release
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Contacts: Phil Josselyn (917) 214 4870
Ruth Santana (917) 543-2208

Occupy Wall Street Protests Swearing in of Congressman Turner for Colombia, Panama, South Korea Free Trade Vote

Who: Occupy Wall Street, TradeJustice New York Metro, Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, NY Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Peruvians in Action New York, Movement for Peace in Colombia, and American Jobs Alliance.

What: Protesters will demonstrate at the district swearing-in ceremony of Congressman Bob Turner in response to his vote for the Colombia, Panama, and South Korea Free Trade Agreements.

When: Sunday, November 13th, 1PM

Where: in front of Queens Metropolitan High School, 91-30 Metropolitan Avenue, between Trotting Course Lane & Selfridge Street, Forest Hills, Queens.

Why: Corporate executive turned Tea Party Congressman was elected to Congress to replace Brooklyn/Queens Congressman Anthony Weiner in a special election in September. On October 12th, he voted for pro-Wall Street, job-killing Korea, Colombia and South Korea Free Trade Agreements, which also threaten human rights and the environment. . On Sunday, he's coming back to New York for swearing-in ceremony in his district and to be rewarded by the 1% with a \$2,500 plate reception.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the South Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (Korea FTA) will cost the United States an estimated 159,000 jobs. The Korea trade deal eliminates or reduces import tariffs on Korean-made goods, allowing Korean products to enter the marketplace at cheaper prices than US-made goods, resulting in less sales of US-made products. Corporations employing workers in the US will either lay off workers and decrease production or outsource production to overseas sweatshops where they can pay workers next to nothing and produce products more cheaply. The Korea FTA only requires that 35% be made in Korea to be treated as Korean-made, meaning that the majority of "Korean" goods can actually be manufactured in sweatshops in China and Vietnam and still be imported into the US with little or no tariff. This puts US workers in direct competition for jobs with workers making pennies an hour and working 16 hours a day. This same rule allows US companies to produce only 35% of a product in the US to export it to Korea with low or nonexistent tariffs. If corporations enjoy the same Korean market access advantage whether they produce "US made" goods here in the US or in Mexican sweatshops, they're left with no reason to keep jobs in the US.

The Korea FTA is celebrated by the Wall Street firms that wrecked our economy and left 9.1% of the US unemployed as the "best" trade deal ever. It includes rules that actually PREVENT Congress from fixing this problem by limiting regulation of risky financial products and services, prohibiting the US from limiting the size of financial institutions, imposing firewalls between the sort of financial services one firm may offer, banning toxic derivatives, or controlling destabilizing capital flights and floods.

The Colombia-US Free Trade Agreement is strongly opposed by human rights groups, labor unions, and environmentalists. Colombia is the world capital for violence against workers, with more unionists killed every year than in the rest of the world combined. Unionist murders are growing from 37 in 2007 after the deal was signed to 51 in 2010— even though Colombia has been under maximum scrutiny. Only 6% of the total 2,680 unionist murders have been prosecuted to date. Outrageously, the deal doesn't require Colombia to end the unionist murders or bring past perpetrators to justice in order to obtain special trade privileges. Colombian unions oppose the deal and agree with U.S. unions that a recent 'action plan' will not fix the horrific situation. Colombia has the highest number of displaced people in the world— outpacing even Sudan— because of forced displacements and land grabs, often with Colombian military involvement. The deal will accelerate displacement of impoverished Afro-Colombians and farmers and the stealing of their lands. Even the Colombian government says trade pact displacement will force campesinos into immigration or illegal drug trafficking. The pact gives incentives for mining, timber and palm oil companies to rip up the Amazon, worsening global warming.

The Panama Free Trade Agreement will help corporations and the super-rich hide their money in overseas bank account. The Senate Homeland Security Committee has estimated that closing offshore tax loopholes could save US taxpayers \$1.05 trillion over the next decade. Losing this revenue means less money for vitally needed government programs -- and less government jobs.

All three trade agreements include rules that allow foreign investors to attack our environmental, health, safety, and labor laws in international tribunals outside of the jurisdiction of US courts. These tribunals allow corporations to sue the US for unlimited sums, demanding compensation not only for money they've lost, but also for money they *might* have made in the future. The US has been forced to spend millions of our tax dollars under similar rules in the the North American Free Trade Agreement to defend our laws against attacks by corporate polluters demanding millions in compensation for being denied their "right" to poison our land, air, and water.

Additional information: <http://tradejustice.net/turnerkit>