



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Senator Grassley delivered this statement on the Senate floor tonight.

Senator Chuck Grassley  
Statement on the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement  
July 22, 2004

Mr. President,

Just yesterday the U.S. Senate passed the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act by a vote of 85 to 13. This followed on the heels of Senate approval of the U.S.-Australia Agreement by a vote of 80 to 16. The Australia bill itself was preceded by renewal and extension of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent on June 24th of this year. Prior to that, the Senate was able to work out its differences and pass the JOBS Act by a vote of 92 to 5. I will note that each of these bills passed in an election year, a year in which many pundits argued that nothing on trade would get done.

Well, we proved them wrong. In fact, this has been one of the most active years on trade in the United States Senate in recent memory. I say, why stop now? We should continue our efforts to open foreign markets to U.S. exports. That is why I am calling on President Bush to send up the Central American Free Trade Agreement at the earliest opportunity.

The CAFTA is an important part of our continuing efforts to open foreign markets to U.S. goods and services. This market access is critical if we are going to continue to grow our exports to the world. For my home state of Iowa, the CAFTA brings important new market access opportunities for our soybean, corn, pork and beef as well as Iowa's manufacturers and service providers.

Under the current framework, many products from the CAFTA nations get access to our market but we do not get the same access to theirs. The CAFTA will change that -- it will level the playing field for U.S. producers so they can compete in this growing market.

The CAFTA also sends a strong message to our Latin American neighbors. It shows our strong desire to reach out and form deeper and lasting bonds with the international community, particularly in Latin America. The agreement will help to lock in economic reform and increase transparency in the region. There is no doubt about it. The CAFTA can serve as a cornerstone of economic growth and democracy for the region which will enhance the standard of living for

millions of our southern neighbors.

A free trade agreement with these nations represents a unique opportunity not only for U.S. farmers, ranchers, businesses and workers, but also for promoting development, security and prosperity in this region. It is a good agreement for the United States and for Central America. I will work closely with President Bush and my Senate colleagues to do all I can to lay the groundwork for a successful vote on CAFTA later this year.