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MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
RE: Colombia trade agreement
DA: April 9, 2008

Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Finance, today made the following comment regarding the reported decision by the House Democratic leadership to seek a rules change for the pending trade agreement between the United States and Colombia.

“Not only would this step by the House be unprecedented, but it effectively tramples a compact between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. The Colombia trade agreement was negotiated under the authority of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002. The President bears the responsibility of delivering an agreement that meets the negotiating objectives specified in the Act. He did so in this case. Now Congress bears the responsibility of bringing it up for a vote. Trade promotion authority doesn’t mandate a vote tomorrow. In fact, there’s ample time to reach agreement on reauthorizing trade adjustment assistance. So, a rules change is simply not necessary. The important point is that we get to vote on both priorities in Congress this year. I hope Democratic leaders in Congress fulfill their responsibilities to make that happen.”