

I voted Yes on H.R. 3079, the United States-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act. The bill would implement an agreement establishing a free trade area between the United States and Panama, which was signed in 2007. The agreement covers all agricultural and industrial sectors, greatly expands market access for U.S. services, and contains strong protections for intellectual property, the labor force and the environment.

Our industrial goods currently face an average tariff of 7 percent in Panama, with some tariffs as high as 81 percent. Conversely, almost all Panamanian goods enter the United States duty free. This agreement would transition the U.S.-Panama trading relationship to a fully reciprocal commitment, helping Upstate exporters gain greater access to the Panamanian market, one of the fastest growing in Latin America. The International Trade Commissions estimates that U.S. exports to Panama for certain sectors would increase up to 145 percent.

This is about jobs here in America. Passage of the trade agreement with Panama opens up a new market for goods, services, agricultural products from Upstate. More demand for our products means more jobs for us right here, because it's more business for our farms and companies in places like Utica, Auburn, Cortland, Norwich, and Little Falls – just to name a few. In the 24th Congressional District, there are almost 20,000 jobs directly supported by foreign trade; and we export over \$5 billion worth of goods each year.

In agriculture alone, New York stands to benefit by nearly \$30 million a year in additional agricultural exports if the Colombia, South Korea and Panama agreements are approved.

These agreements will boost our fruit, vegetable, wine, dairy, other farm exports to these three countries.

It's also important that we assist workers that may be adversely impacted by a trade agreement. That is why I am also voting to provide Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits to workers affected by foreign trade. TAA provides job training and extended

unemployment benefits, among others, to qualified individuals.

To keep and create jobs in Upstate, we need to grow crops, innovate new services, and manufacture goods in Upstate. The United States-Panama trade agreement helps us do just that by opening a new market abroad for our people to compete in.