

Week Ending Friday, October 19, 2007

**Statement on Representative Ralph S. Regula's Decision Not To Seek Reelection**

*October 12, 2007*

Ralph Regula is a distinguished public servant who has dedicated his life to helping the citizens of Ohio's 16th Congressional District and our Nation. As a sailor, teacher, and legislator, he has worked tirelessly to make America stronger.

While serving for over three decades in Congress, Ralph has returned weekly to his family farm and never lost sight of the issues that matter most to the people of Ohio. He has long had a commitment to creating jobs, strengthening schools, supporting small businesses, and protecting Ohio's natural treasures. As the longest continuously serving U.S. Representative in his State's history, Ralph will retire with the respect of his peers and the appreciation of his constituents.

Laura and I are grateful for his service and appreciate his friendship. We wish Ralph, Mary, and the entire Regula family all the best.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**The President's Radio Address**

*October 13, 2007*

Good morning. This is an historic time for our Nation's economy. Last week, we learned that September was America's 49th consecutive month of job creation—the longest uninterrupted period of job growth on record. And on Thursday, we learned that the American economy set a new record for exports in a single month. Millions of American jobs depend on exports. More exports support better and higher paying jobs, and to keep our economy expanding, we need to keep expanding trade.

This week, I traveled to Miami to discuss the importance of trade and to call on Congress to pass new free trade agreements. In January of 2001, America had trade agreements in force with three countries. Now we have agreements in force with 14 countries, including 7 in Latin America. And Congress now has an opportunity to increase America's access to markets in our hemisphere by passing three more free trade agreements in Latin America with Peru, Colombia, and Panama.

These three agreements will expand America's access to 75 million customers. These 75 million customers are the equivalent of the populations of California, Colorado, Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, and Massachusetts combined.

The first of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Peru. This agreement would level the playing field for American businesses and workers and farmers. While almost all Peruvian exports to the United States now enter duty-free, most American exports to Peru face significant tariffs. The free trade agreement would immediately eliminate most of Peru's industrial tariffs, as well as many of its barriers to U.S. agriculture exports, and make American products more affordable and more competitive in that country.

The second of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Colombia. Colombia is now our fifth largest trading partner in Latin America and the largest market for U.S. agricultural exports in South America. The free trade agreement with Colombia would immediately eliminate tariffs on more than 80 percent of American industrial and consumer exports. It would provide significant new duty-free access for American crops, and for the first time in history, U.S. companies would be able to compete on a level playing field.