

(July 27, 2005) LIPINSKI OPPOSES CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (CAFTA)

LIPINSKI OPPOSES CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (CAFTA)

Urges Fair Trade Policy That Protects American Workers

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Rep. Dan Lipinski voted against the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) citing concerns about the loss of American jobs, poor labor standards, and lax environmental protections. The U.S. House of Representatives approved CAFTA on a 217-215 vote.

"Despite promises by proponents of various trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Chinese Permanent Normal Trade Relations pact (PNTR), these deals have not produced American job growth," said Rep. Lipinski. "In fact, since entering NAFTA, the U.S. has lost nearly 2.5 million manufacturing jobs, including 47,000 here in Illinois alone."

CAFTA would implement a trade agreement between the United States., the Dominican Republic, and five Central American nations: Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. CAFTA would likely exacerbate our already record trade deficit. Last year, the United States had an unprecedented \$617 billion global trade deficit. The U.S. already runs a trade deficit of \$2 billion with the six CAFTA nations, and CAFTA most certainly has the potential to increase that. In addition, CAFTA does not require these countries to improve their environmental laws to meet any minimum standards, which are critical to improving water systems and protecting public health in these trading countries.

"Undoubtedly, trade is an important component of our national economy, and I am a strong proponent of fair trade laws," Congressman Lipinski said. "I believe we should negotiate these trade deals to better protect American jobs, the environment, and fair labor standards, and to encourage stronger economic growth."