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## *House of Representatives*

# CAFTA--THE EXPLOITATION OF CHEAP LABOR!

### HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, the Republic Leadership has insisted on bringing the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) before the House tonight. CAFTA tacitly endorses labor and environmental conditions in Central America that would be illegal in the U.S.

CAFTA allows goods produced under these conditions to unfairly compete with the Imperial County sugar growers, of my district. If we pass this agreement, American farmers and ranchers that comply with U.S. environmental and labor standards will be at a grave disadvantage in the global economy.

My district which encompasses the border of California and Mexico, has felt the negative impact from the failure of the North

America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). My district has seen NAFTA's promises broken, translating free trade into poverty; increasing social inequality; and creating severe environmental degradation.

The current CAFTA proposal would expand on NAFTA's failures, and send the wrong message: labor and environmental standards are not as important as producing cheap goods under horrible labor conditions.

At the minimum CAFTA should call for basic labor standards including child labor protections, and environmental standards. Make no mistake about it, CAFTA is not about national security, it's about the exploitation of cheap labor!