

By Senator Garcia

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Senate Memorial No. ____

A memorial to the United States Congress, urging support for Florida's bid to become the permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade Area of the Americas; urging the United States Congress to support activities promoting safe commerce and secure trade lanes between the United States and its trading partners in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

WHEREAS, negotiations are progressing on development of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which will unite the economies of the Western Hemisphere by creating a single free trade agreement among 800 million consumers with a combined gross domestic product of \$14 trillion, and

WHEREAS, Florida is competing to become the permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which, together with the trade and investment activity under the agreement, would create new jobs and revenues for the state and local governments, and

WHEREAS, total merchandise trade between Florida and the Western Hemisphere exceeds \$45 billion dollars annually and represents more than 65 percent of Florida's total merchandise trade, and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes the critical economic contribution of the state's agriculture industry and supports efforts to ensure that the interests of the agriculture industry are incorporated into trade negotiations and agreements, and

1 WHEREAS, the purpose of free trade agreements like the
2 Free Trade Area of the Americas is to ease impediments to the
3 flow of international commerce and further stimulate
4 North-South trade and investment flows in the Western
5 Hemisphere, and

6 WHEREAS, the terrorist events of September 11, 2001,
7 have led to the development of new security requirements on
8 vessels, seaports, and the state's trading partners, and

9 WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Customs and Border
10 Protection has created the Container Security Initiative to
11 extend the United States' zone of security outward in North
12 America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, but has not extended this
13 zone of security outward to the Caribbean, Central America, or
14 South America, and

15 WHEREAS, the United States Congress has financed the
16 development of Operation Safe Commerce in New York, New
17 Jersey, California, and Washington to develop a secure global
18 supply chain between seaports in those states and their
19 international trading partners in Asia, Europe, and Africa,
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes that enhancing
22 the security capacity of seaports in the Western Hemisphere,
23 without creating an unfair advantage for our trading partners'
24 goods versus Florida goods, will enhance the development of
25 North-South trade and investment flows, and

26 WHEREAS, the economy of the State of Florida will
27 benefit immeasurably from the liberalization of safe and
28 secure cross-border trade in goods and services, and

29 WHEREAS, hosting the Secretariat for the Free Trade
30 Area of the Americas, together with increased safe and secure
31 international trade and investment activity stemming from the

1 trade agreement, will solidify Florida's role as the "Gateway
2 to the Americas," NOW, THEREFORE,

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4 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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6 That the State of Florida urges the United States
7 Congress to continue to support Florida's bid to become the
8 permanent location for the Secretariat for the Free Trade Area
9 of the Americas.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Florida urges
11 the United States Congress to support and fund the Americas
12 Operation Safe Commerce program between seaports in the
13 Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the United
14 States.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Americas Operation Safe
16 Commerce program would establish a collaborative effort
17 between the United States government, international trading
18 partners, the State of Florida, the maritime industry, and
19 other business interests to develop and share best practices
20 for the safe, secure, and expeditious movement of goods
21 between the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the
22 United States.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
24 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
25 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
26 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
27 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

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