

[The Foundry](#)

Colombian Labor Leaders Risk Their Lives on DC's Mean Streets

Posted June 15th, 2011 at 6:00pm in [Enterprise and Free Markets](#) with **0** comments  [Print This Post](#)

Like

Be the first of your friends to like this.

The AFL-CIO recently ran expensive, full-page ads in several inside-the-beltway publications highlighting the threat of violence facing union leaders in Colombia.

Their ads left out the fact that Colombian labor leaders currently visiting our nation's capital are more likely to be murdered here than when they return to their home country.

Since 2000, the [murder rate](#) in Washington, D.C., has averaged 34.8 per 100,000 inhabitants.

According to the Cato Institute, the murder rate [in Colombia](#) is 33.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, with just 5.3 killings of union leaders per 100,000 unionists.



In any case, the debate over union violence should not detract from efforts to lift Colombians from poverty and promote civil society by implementing the [U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement](#) without further delay.

As Colombia's oldest newspaper, *El Espectador*, has [editorialized](#): “Blocking a tool like the free trade agreement, which seeks to foment development, does not seem like the best mechanism for defending Colombian trade unionists.”



Author: [Bryan Riley](#)