

SOAR in Canada Condemns Colombian Trade Deal

END MEANS TESTING

Say SOAR Members to Homecare Hearings

TORONTO — In a submission presented on June 17 to the Ontario Health Coalition's cross-province hearings into homecare reform, SOAR outlined its concerns with the present system and made recommendations for improvements.

SOAR called for an end to means testing and demanded centrally standardized regulations be established across the province so that all citizens would receive the same high quality care no matter where they live.

The brief also addressed the controversial issue of competitive bidding. First, SOAR demanded that all for-profit organizations be excluded. Second, SOAR recommended an end to the bidding process that undermines staff-patient relations and jeopardizes continuity of proper care. Competition should be based solely on quality of care not cost.

SOAR called on the government to set funding on a per-capita basis. A provincial advisory committee made up of health care providers, patients and patient advocates would develop the funding formula, regulations and levels of patient care.

SOAR condemned the current system for its lack of continuity of care caused by contracts being changed from one provider to another. To alleviate this SOAR called for labour law protection for workers in homecare similar to other sectors. SOAR also recommended strengthening ties between home-care and other social service agencies.

SOAR noted that the current staff shortage can be addressed by providing employment stability and decent wages.

In June all Canadian SOAR chapter presidents and recording secretaries received a note from the USW Canadian National Office asking them to sign a petition demanding that Canada not enter into a trade agreement with Colombia.

New Democratic Party MPs Peter Julian and Libby Davies are spearheading the campaign in the House of Commons. Julian learned from one Canadian negotiator that if a Colombian trade unionist is murdered the Colombian government would be obliged to make a payment into a "cooperation fund" much like a traffic ticket.

You can help stop human rights abuses in Colombia by visiting Peter Julian's web site <http://www.peterjulian.ca> and downloading the petition or you can send an e-mail to your own MP by using the e-lobby feature of the USW Canadian web site www.usw.ca.

CHINA CHEATS

Members of SOAR Chapter 10-5 in Western Pennsylvania joined other Steelworkers from five local unions in Pennsylvania and Ohio in Washington, D.C. to show their support of the steel pipe industry in its trade case against China.

The United Steelworkers and the U.S. steel pipe manufacturers have been fighting the increased amount of imported pipe entering this country from China. Chinese steel pipe imports have risen from 10,000 tons in 2002 to 750,000 tons in 2007. An increase of nearly 6,900 percent! In this short time 25 percent of American workers in this segment of the industry lost their jobs.

SOAR members along with active Steelworkers attended the International Trade Commission (ITC) hearing. The ITC ruled unanimously that the Chinese government was unfairly subsidizing the U.S. steel pipe industry and that the Chinese were selling their steel pipe in the United States far below their production costs, in a practice known



SOAR and USW members in front of the United States International Trade Commission Building in Washington, D.C.

as "dumping." The ruling resulted in significant duties placed on imported Chinese steel pipe.

United Steelworkers President Leo W. Gerard called the commission ruling a major victory that should send a clear message to China and American politicians that "China is a trade cheat."