

THE AFFORDABLE FOOTWEAR COALITION

October 23, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leaders Reid, McConnell and Boehner:

Recently, in the midst of economic turmoil, Congress worked together to pass legislation that would unfreeze credit and reintroduce liquidity to the market. As leaders in the retail industry, we applaud Congress's efforts to quickly address a growing financial crisis. Amid the concerns of major financial institutions failing, it is important to remember the millions of hard working families across the country that have been hit hardest by a souring economy and merit direct relief. Toward that end, we urge our leaders in Congress to pass the Affordable Footwear Act (H.R. 3934/S. 2372), which would offer timely relief to consumers on the cost of a basic necessity – all children's footwear and other moderately priced shoes.

Fortunately, this bipartisan legislation, sponsored by over one-third of the House of Representatives and fourteen Senators, is something that Congress can move on quickly when it returns to Washington, DC after the elections.

The Affordable Footwear Act would eliminate the highest and most regressive tariffs on footwear no longer manufactured in the United States. The legislation is supported by retailers and domestic footwear manufacturers alike. Most importantly, the Affordable Footwear Act would eliminate duties that no longer serve any purpose except to raise the cost of shoes to hard working consumers. These tariffs go back to the Smoot-Hawley laws passed in the 1930s and have not been changed since – even though the footwear in the bill has not been manufactured in the United States for decades.

Understandably, amid the urgency to pass the recovery bill, popular and important legislation like the Affordable Footwear Act was put aside. However, Congress can still act this year, as it now seems likely it will return this session to consider another stimulus measure to help jumpstart the economy. The Affordable Footwear Act is the perfect opportunity to provide a tangible tax cut that would immediately stimulate the economy and provide a benefit to Main Street Americans. We urge the inclusion of Affordable Footwear Act in appropriate legislation that passes during the lame duck session to assist struggling Americans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Jackson
CEO
ACI International
Los Angeles, CA

Rick Bourne
President and COO
ASICS America Corporation
Irvine, CA

Robert Campbell
CEO
BBC International
Boca Raton, FL

Ronald A Fromm
Chairman and CEO
Brown Shoe Company
St. Louis, MO

James Salzano
Executive Vice President
The Clarks Companies
Newton Upper Falls, MA

Angel Martinez
Chairman and CEO
Deckers Outdoor Corporation
Goleta, CA

Joe Russell
CEO
Elan-Polo, Inc.
St. Louis, MO

Hal Pennington
CEO
Genesco, Inc.
Nashville, TN

Frank Arnstein
CEO
Inter Pacific Corp.
Los Angeles, CA

Kurt Nath Tandem
Associate General Counsel
Adidas
Portland, OR

Alan Colman
CEO
Atsco Footwear
Avon, MA

Jim Weber
President and CEO
Brooks Sports, Inc.
Bothell, WA

Alex Del Cielo
COO
Camuto Group
Greenwich, CT

Tim Boyle
President and CEO
Columbia Sportswear Company
Portland, OR

Michael Muskat
President and CEO
Deer Stags, Inc.
New York, NY

Jeffrey A. Shepard
CEO and President
Footstar Inc.
Mahwah, NJ

Jim Issler
President and CEO
H.H. Brown Shoe Company
Greenwich, CT

Harvey K. Gerdy
CEO
International Seaway Trading Corp.
Boca Raton, FL

Lawrence Tarica
CEO
Jimlar Corporation
Great Neck, NY

Jim Kimberlin
President
LJO, Inc.
Wayne, NJ

Gregg Foss
President
Laird, Ltd.
Marietta, GA

Ron McCray
Chief Administrative Officer
Nike Inc.
Beaverton, OR

Robert T. DeMartini
CEO
New Balance Athletic Shoes Inc.
Boston, MA

Matthew E. Rubel
Chairman
Payless Shoesource, Inc.
Topeka, KS

Alan Luchette
COO
Nine West Footwear Corp.
New York, NY

Michael Laemmermann
COO/CFO
PUMA North America, Inc.
Westford, MA

Bob Moore
CEO
Prime Tanning Co., Inc.
Berwick, ME

William J. Sweasy
Chairman and CEO
Red Wing Shoe Company, Inc.
Red Wing, MN

Bjoern Gulden
CEO
Rack Room Shoes
Charlotte, NC

Dale Whitney
President
Renaissance Imports, Inc.
Matthews, NC

Uli Becker
President and CEO
Reebok International, Ltd.
Canton, MA

Michael Rupp
President
The Rockport Company, LLC
Canton, MA

Greg Tunney
CEO
RG Barry
Columbus, OH

Bobby Tucker, Sr.
CEO
Shoe Show, Inc.
Concord, NC

Mark Lemond
President
Shoe Carnival
Evansville, IN

David Weinberg
COO
Skechers USA, Inc.
Manhattan Beach, CA

Bret Rasmussen
President and CEO
Kuru Footwear
Salt Lake City, UT

Gregg Ribatt
President and CEO
The Stride Rite Corporation
Lexington, MA

Bryan P. Collins
President
Topline Corporation
Seattle, WA

Mark Feldman
General Manager
Valley Lane Industries
New York, NY

Eduardo Castro-Wright
President and CEO
Wal-Mart U.S.
Bentonville, AR

Michael Berkson
President
Stanbee
Carlstadt, NJ

Jeffrey B. Swartz
President and CEO
The Timberland Company
Stratham, NH

Larry Skaggs
CEO
Trimfoot CO., LLC
Farmington, MO

Eric Wiseman
CEO
VF Corporation
Greensboro, NC

Blake Krueger
President and CEO
Wolverine World Wide Inc.
Rockford, MI