



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FDRA WELCOMES AFA HOUSE INTRODUCTION; CALLS FOR SWIFT ENACTMENT

The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) applauds the reintroduction of the Affordable Footwear Act (AFA), H.R.2697, in the United States House of Representatives. If passed, AFA would eliminate approximately \$800 million in duties on a variety of different types of footwear, including lower-priced children's footwear, outdoor shoes and some athletic. The bill's original sponsors are Representative Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and Joseph Crowley (D-NY).

"As we continue to work toward recovery, Congress must strive to relieve the burdensome costs government puts on consumers, especially consumers in lower and middle income families," stated Representative Jenkins upon introduction of the bill. "That is precisely what this legislation does; it lifts burdensome and punitive tariffs that affect those most in need. I am proud to introduce this legislation into the House, and I am hopeful Congress will move quickly to consider this worthwhile legislation."

"FDRA wishes to thank Representatives Jenkins and Crowley for their bipartisan leadership on behalf of all American consumers," stated Matt Priest, president of FDRA. "This legislation will end what is perhaps the most pernicious and discriminatory tax on lower and middle income families. At the end of the day, everyone needs shoes, so taxing this necessity at such high levels is completely unjustified. It is exactly the type of sensible policy we need from Washington, DC. We are very honored that Representatives Kevin Brady, Chairman of the Ways & Means Trade Subcommittee, and Earl Blumenauer have joined Representatives Jenkins and Crowley as original co-sponsors."

"The duties covered by the Affordable Footwear Act are outdated and no longer protect any U.S. jobs," said Priest. "In fact, passage of AFA will provide an economic boost to working families as nearly one-third of the price of each and every shoe purchased by U.S. consumers is directly attributed to the shoe tax. FDRA members look forward to working with the bill's supporters to secure a swift enactment."

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FDRA accounts for approximately 80% of all footwear sales in the U.S., representing the industry's leading retailers, brands and buying agents. Its services include lobbying and advocacy for industry causes, educational programs and trade publications.

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AAFA Welcomes House Introduction of *Affordable Footwear Act*

Arlington, VA – The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) today welcomed the introduction of the *Affordable Footwear Act*, common sense legislation that would eliminate the hidden and regressive tax on most low-cost and children’s shoes. The *Affordable Footwear Act* (H.R. 2697) was introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and co-sponsored by Representatives Joe Crowley (D-NY), Kevin Brady (R-TX), and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR). The *Affordable Footwear Act* was introduced in the U.S. Senate on May 25, 2011.

“With today’s introduction of the *Affordable Footwear Act* in the House, we are one step closer to realizing common sense duty reductions that will benefit hardworking American families,” said AAFA President and CEO Kevin M. Burke. “I look forward to working with both houses of Congress to quickly pass this consumer cost-savings legislation.”

The *Affordable Footwear Act* will ease the tax burden on American consumers who unknowingly pay more than 25 percent beyond the cost of a pair of shoes at retail to cover the import duty, or shoe tax, on shoes made outside of the United States. In 2010, 99 percent of the shoes purchased in the United States were produced internationally, so there is no way for hardworking American families to avoid this out-dated tax.

Furthermore, American families in the market for affordable and low-cost shoes for themselves and their children pay a higher import duty, as high as 67 percent, than if they were to purchase luxury brand shoes.

After its passage, the *Affordable Footwear Act* would eliminate about \$800 million in duties on children’s and low-cost shoes out of the \$2 billion in total duties collected on imported shoes in 2010. Undeniably, shoes are a life necessity, and the hidden and regressive shoe tax places too high a burden on hardworking American families at a time when they can least afford it.

While the *Affordable Footwear Act* eliminates the import duties on low-cost and children’s footwear no longer made in the United States, AAFA recognizes that there remains a small, but vibrant, U.S. footwear manufacturing industry. The *Affordable Footwear Act* protects this industry while helping U.S. consumers.

Quick passage of the *Affordable Footwear Act* will be a positive step towards restoring consumer confidence, increasing retail sales, and protecting vital jobs in the U.S. footwear industry.

To learn more about the *Affordable Footwear Act* visit www.EndTheShoeTax.org.

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The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. AAFA's mission is to promote and enhance its members' competitiveness, productivity and profitability in the global market by minimizing regulatory, commercial, political, and trade restraints.



For Immediate Release

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Affordable Footwear Act (H.R. 2697) introduced in U.S. House of Representatives

Footwear bill would lower costs, support U.S. footwear manufacturers

BOULDER, CO (July 29, 2011) – H.R. 2697, the Affordable Footwear Act (AFA), was introduced today in the United States House of Representatives by Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins (R-KS, 2nd), Congressman Joe Crowley (D-NY, 7th), Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR, 3rd) and Congressman Kevin Brady (R-TX, 8th), the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Trade.

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) joined manufacturers and retailers across the outdoor industry in applauding today's introduction. OIA and many member companies, worked hard to develop the legislation that will lower costs for outdoor industry footwear manufacturers and their customers while supporting U.S. production of outdoor footwear products.

With footwear being the fastest growing category in outdoor industry product sales, passage of the Affordable Footwear Act is a top priority for OIA. H.R. 2697 was modeled after successful OIA legislation that has saved outdoor industry companies more than \$25 million to date. With the bill's passage, the significant savings generated will be reinvested back into product innovation, job creation and lower costs for outdoor consumers.

The AFA would create a three year suspension of many of the disproportionately high import tariffs, some as high as 37.5 percent, that are assessed against outdoor footwear. In fact, many of the high tariffs on outdoor footwear exceed federal taxes on cigarettes, a striking disparity that would be corrected with the AFA's passage.

The bill also ensures U.S. manufacturing that is currently underway in this area remains globally competitive by excluding products with American manufacturing. The bill is also temporary so that domestic production can be reevaluated after four years and products removed where appropriate.

"The Affordable Footwear Act is a balanced, well crafted bill that is a win-win for everyone," said OIA President & CEO Frank Hugelmeyer. "The lower costs resulting from this bill will allow footwear companies to invest in new product innovation and U.S. jobs and will ultimately lower retail prices making these products more affordable and accessible by a broader range of Americans."

OIA encourages its members to support passage of the Affordable Footwear Act by calling or emailing your representatives and requesting they cosponsor the legislation.

About Outdoor Industry Association

Based in Boulder, CO, Outdoor Industry Association® is the leading trade association for the outdoor industry and the title sponsor of Outdoor Retailer. OIA supports the growth and success of more than 4,000 manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, sales representatives and retailers of outdoor recreation apparel, footwear, equipment and services. For more information go to www.outdoorindustry.org.