



June 18, 2007

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McCrery
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel and Ranking Member McCrery:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Consumers for World Trade (CWT), I am writing to urge your support of HR 2604, the *Affordable Footwear Act* that was introduced on June 12th and has been referred to the Ways and Means Committee. This bill proposes to eliminate tariffs on certain footwear items helping hard working Americans purchase shoes for their families. The bill also ensures that domestic footwear manufacturers, and the workers they employ, are not disadvantaged by the tariff elimination.

HR 2604 would go a long way to help provide hard working Americans families with access to competitively priced shoes. Specifically, the bill would eliminate many high tariffs on low priced rubber soled fabric uppers and most children's shoes. The tariffs on these footwear items, purchased mostly by neediest of American families, can be as high as 65%, while the average industrial tariff in the U.S. is only about 6%. High US footwear tariffs were first imposed in 1930 as part of an industrial policy design to protect domestic manufacturing. Today, much of this production no longer exists in the US and the continued high prices have acted as a tax that falls heavily on the consumers of low-priced rubber soled shoes, mostly needy American families. In some cases, these high tariffs comprise almost 40% of the price of the shoe. This bill, that eliminates these high tariffs, will greatly help reduce footwear prices and help Americans afford shoes for their families – a necessity of life.

HR 2604 would eliminate this regressive tax on the American family while also ensuring that domestic footwear manufacturers and workers are not disadvantaged or displaced by this tariff elimination. Tariff eliminations would not apply to any footwear item produced in the U.S.

We urge you to support HR 2604 that would provide low cost shoes to American families while protecting American footwear production and employment.

Sincerely,

Robin Lanier
Executive Director

CC: Ways and Means Committee Members

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