

DR Textile Bill Moving

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The House is slated to vote this week on legislation (HR 6560) aimed at promoting the use of US textiles in apparel produced in the Dominican Republic (WTD, 7/23/08).

The bill - introduced by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel (D-NY) and ranking Republican Jim McCrery (La) last week is slated for the suspensions calendar - reserved for noncontroversial bills. Mr. McCrery told WTD last week he expects the bill to pass easily.

The legislation would reward apparel producers in the Dominican Republic for using US fabric by giving them a credit they could then use to ship duty-free to the US market apparel items using third-country fabric under the country's free trade agreement with the United States.

Separately, Ways and Means member Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) said Friday he hopes Congress will approve legislation (HR 3934) eliminating tariffs on low-priced imported shoes as part of the next miscellaneous tariff bill. The legislation aims to help lower-income families by doing away with tariffs on cheap footwear. Lower income working families pay proportionally more in tariffs on the imported products than do higher-income people, Mr. Blumenauer noted at a forum sponsored by the Cato Institute.

The member called the US tariff code "goofy," saying that it has not been updated since the 1960s and high tariffs remain on products that are no longer produced in the United States. Absent an overhaul of the tariff code, Mr. Blumenauer said the miscellaneous tariff bill represents the only opportunity to correct some of the inequities in the code.

Ways and Means earlier this year began the process of putting together a miscellaneous tariff bill but legislation has not been introduced.