



April 11, 2007

The Honorable Evan Bayh
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Voinovich
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 522, the *Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Act*

Dear Senators Bayh and Voinovich:

On behalf of the companies represented by the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I am writing in support of S. 522, the *Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Act*. We appreciate your combined efforts to develop this legislation with industry input to ensure that efforts this Administration has put forth to advance intellectual property enforcement will be maintained and strengthened by future Administrations.

AAFA is the national trade association for the apparel and footwear industries, representing manufacturers and owners of some of the most well known U.S.-made and U.S.-branded apparel, footwear and textiles companies. Many of the brand items owned and manufactured by AAFA members including wearing apparel, footwear, handbags, wallets and backpacks make up 66% of the total value of items seized by the Department of Homeland Security in 2006 up from 43% in 2005. Global trafficking in illegal imitation goods continues to increase, costing U.S. companies an estimated \$250 billion per year. Clearly, the protection of intellectual property rights in the U.S. and abroad is a top priority of many of our members as the effects of counterfeiting are far reaching and work to stifle U.S. innovation and competitiveness, our most valued commodities.

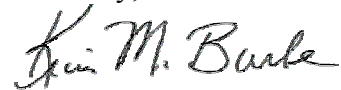
The efforts of this administration to combat intellectual property theft through the Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy (STOP!) have been extensive and it would be a travesty for these efforts to diminish should the focus shift in a new Administration. Passage of S. 522 is imperative for the continued growth, innovation and prosperity of U.S. companies. For these reasons, we are pleased that the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs has scheduled a hearing on S. 522, and hope the Senate Judiciary Committee follows suit in the near future.

Provisions in this legislation important to AAFA members include the improvements in the overall strategy toward intellectual property rights enforcement. By inserting additional oversight through the creation of an IP Enforcement Network and adding the Department of Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, the coordination and focus of the

agencies currently responsible for U.S. strategy for tracking and combating IP violations will be greatly improved. Since many of the individuals responsible for organized piracy and trafficking in counterfeit products are often linked to larger crime rings, following the successful model used by the U.S. government to track and prosecute money laundering and other black-market crimes is a logical approach. We are also very supportive of the provision to elevate the representatives of each agency involved in the Enforcement Network to Deputy level positions, ensuring that the future commitment to IP enforcement will not be subject to the unique priorities of any particular Administration. And, directing the White House and the President's Coordinator to develop a Strategic Plan and report on the progress to Congress annually will allow for the proper examination of the current direction of the program and open up opportunities for any needed improvements. Finally, as this crime is a global problem and becoming more of a focus for many of our global partners, we heavily support the creation of an international task force toward this effort.

Again, we applaud your efforts to develop comprehensive legislation to protect the integrity of U.S. IP, trademark and brand holders. We look forward to working with you to advance the consideration and passage of S. 522 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin M. Burke
President & CEO