



July 6, 2009

The Honorable Joseph Crowley
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter King
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressmen Crowley and King:

On behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) – the national trade association representing the apparel and footwear industry, and its suppliers – we applaud your stand against the repressive military junta ruling Burma by sponsoring H.J. Res 56 to renew the import restrictions contained in the *Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003*. We strongly support this renewal because it will send a clear and unmistakable message that the United States is not interested in doing business with regimes such as the one that brutally enslaves the people of Burma.

The *Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003* included a total ban on imports from Burma. As you know, the import ban will expire unless Congress passes, and the President signs into law, legislation to renew the ban by July 26.

Despite our efforts, the ruling military junta in Burma has shown no willingness to address the many problems that made these sanctions necessary. Indeed, as the most recent U.S. State Department Human Rights Report states, “The government detained civic activists indefinitely and without charges”. Moreover, “The government routinely infringed on citizens' privacy and restricted freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement.”

Most recently, the international community has been outraged by the junta's arrest and persecution of general secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Aung San Suu Kyi. Facing trumped-up charges that she violated her most recent house arrest, the long-time advocate of freedom and democracy faces up to five years in prison. In light of the planned, upcoming elections, the first multiparty election since 1990 when NLD was declared victorious, many believe the arrest is an attempt to keep Aung San Suu Kyi isolated from the people.

Therefore, we believe that now is the time to reinforce our sanctions tools against Burma's government. We hope that we can also work together to capitalize on heightened international awareness of the plight of the Burmese people and press our allies in the region and around the world to impose similar sanctions against this brutal regime. Only when Burma's government is confronted by a world united, will freedom truly come to the Burmese people.

We look forward to working with you to see this renewal swiftly considered and enacted.

Sincerely,

Kevin Burke
President & CEO