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The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 21, 2012

Dear Chairman Camp:

Warson Brands is pleased to submit these comments in support of the following bills introduced by Rep. Russ Carnahan: H.R. 4891, 4892, 4893, 4894, 4895, 4896. These bills provide a temporary duty suspension for several different styles of work footwear with a protective toe cap made of composite (non-metal) materials.

Warson Brands is recognized as a leader in occupational footwear. Located in St. Louis, Missouri, the company markets work shoes and boots under the popular brands of Converse, Rockport and Florsheim. Warson Brands shoes are designed to offer exceptional fit, comfort and safety to working feet. Warson Brands footwear is worn by police officers, swat teams, postal workers, military personnel, security guards, factory employees, construction workers and many other working men and women in America. The "composite toe caps" are particularly necessary to workers who must pass through security. They provide a high level of protection, but because they do not contain metal, the composite toe footwear is security-friendly. The composite toe caps are lightweight adding comfort to the footwear which must be worn all day long on the job.

The six bills referenced above include the following: six categories of work footwear for which we are seeking duty suspensions include the following categories having a composite toe cap:

- Men's oxford work shoes with a composite toe cap
- Women's oxford work shoes with a composite toe cap
- Men's high-top work shoes with a composite toe cap
- Women's high-top work shoes with a composite toe cap
- Men's work boots with a composite toe cap
- Women's work boots with a composite toe cap

The current duty-rate on the above products ranges from 8 ½% to 10% even though there is no U.S. production of the composite toe cap work shoes and boots to protect. Passage of duty suspension bills for these products is particularly compelling as it will make these important categories of footwear more affordable for working men and women. It is also important to note that the oxford-style work shoes for men and for women enjoyed a duty suspension for three years, but expired December 31, 2009.

We urge the committee to include these bills in the MTB package. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Maritz
President