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September 10, 2015

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U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

I would like to bring your attention to the immediate need for a study to review the competitiveness of our nation's domestic textile, apparel, and footwear industries, particularly with respect to the Berry Amendment.

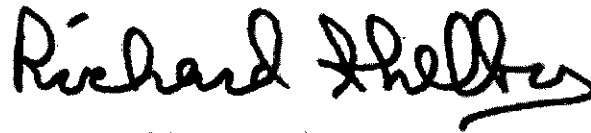
The Berry Amendment is a longstanding provision, made permanent by section 8005 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (10 U.S.C. 2533a), which requires the U.S. military to purchase American-made uniforms and textiles. Not only does this amendment support domestic manufacturers of yarn, fabric, clothing, and footwear, but it also helps to keep the men and women of our armed forces equipped with lifesaving products. The proper implementation of the Berry Amendment is essential to the viability of the U.S. textile, apparel, and footwear industrial base.

During a recent visit with a U.S. uniform manufacturer located in Centre, Alabama, I witnessed first-hand how the Berry Amendment supports American workers, companies, and communities. However, I am concerned that there is insufficient attention and understanding of the importance of the Berry Amendment in the federal procurement process. This lack of understanding could lead to contract awards that are not compliant with the Berry Amendment and translate into lost jobs and opportunities here in America.

With this in mind, I request the Department's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) conduct a comprehensive study on the health, the competitiveness, and the contribution of the U.S. textile, apparel, and footwear industry to the U.S. economy. This study should include: (1) a review of whether the United States is increasing its dependency on foreign sources for critical textile-related materials; (2) potential threats to internal security from increased foreign sourcing and dependency; and (3) whether the Berry amendment and other Buy-American provisions are being effectively enforced by the Department of Defense.

The BIS conducted a similar study in 2003. Since then the industry has undergone considerable transition, particularly as the needs of our military have evolved. I believe it is time for a fresh assessment and would appreciate your assistance with this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Shelby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Richard C. Shelby

Chairman

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies