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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

CONSERVATION, RESEARCH,  
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
HEALTH

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2024

House Armed Services Committee  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before the House Armed Services Committee as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Member Day.

I am here today to advocate for the inclusion of a bipartisan ask focused on the safety of our military members and in support of domestic manufacturing.

This bipartisan provision, crafted in partnership with House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bost, has two major aims. The first is that it will require the Department of Defense to issue regulations to the Department of the Army to ensure all boots are Berry-amendment compliant and meet the highest quality and performance standards. Our troops deserve to have the best quality military equipment and uniforms to support the rigors of training and deployment. The second aim of this provision is to improve our domestic industrial supply base by requiring boots be American-made and that all materials in the supply chain are American-sourced.

Over the past several years, there has been a concerning influx of poorly made, non-Berry compliant, and foreign-sourced footwear targeted at the United States Army. Army Regulation 670-1 was created to ensure that garments and equipment worn by our soldiers meet certain appearance and quality standards, and to make sure equipment could withstand severe conditions.

However, over time, the market for Army soldier footwear has been taken over by foreign manufacturers, to the point where much of the Army footwear we see today only have the appearance of AR-670 design but do not meet the performance or quality standards. This means current Army uniform regulations allow soldiers to purchase foreign-made combat boots that pose a significant safety threat to them and their fellow soldiers.

Ensuring American-sourced and -made boots are worn by our military personnel is not a novel idea. In fact, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps require their service members wear American-made boots at all times. It is past time we require the same for the Department of the Army.

I thank Congressman Bost for his partnership on this important provision, and I ask that the Committee support its inclusion and passage in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony, and I look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nikki Budzinski". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress