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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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May 20, 2025

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
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 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Member Day.

I am here before you again this year to advocate for the inclusion of a policy that would stimulate domestic manufacturing, create new jobs, and protect the health and safety of our military service members.

The bipartisan BOOTS Act would ensure that all optional combat boots available to our military personnel are Berry Amendment-compliant—meaning they are made in the United States and sourced from American materials.

Right now, Department of Defense (DoD) regulations permit soldiers to purchase foreign-made boots that mimic the appearance of regulation boots, but fall far short in quality and durability. Not only does this leave our troops vulnerable to injury; it also undermines our defense supply chain.

These concerns are underscored in the 2024 *CAMOLAND Clothing and Textile Industrial Base Wargame Report*, commissioned by the DoD's Defense Logistics Agency. The report warns that, in the event of a major conflict, the current clothing and textile supply chain would be too fragile to meet demand. Among its recommendations is that military exchanges stock only Berry-compliant uniform items, including boots, citing a troubling increase in reliance on foreign-made footwear – a critical vulnerability in our supply chain.

The BOOTS Act addressing this issue passed the House in last year's NDAA but was ultimately stripped in conference negotiations. However, the final bill did include language directing DoD to report to Congress on the feasibility of requiring Berry-amendment compliant boots.

In its response, DoD acknowledged that continued reliance on foreign-made boots risks further weakening our domestic footwear industrial base and job market. The report also raised repeated concerns about quality, as foreign-made boots may not meet the same quality standards as domestic-made boots – potentially compromising the safety and well-being of our servicemembers.

Lastly, select branches noted that requiring Berry-amendment boots could support domestic job creation and stimulate investment in U.S. footwear manufacturing infrastructure. That is why we must include the BOOTS Act in the NDAA. This bipartisan policy aligns with President Trump's stated commitment to revitalizing American manufacturing and bringing jobs back home. By including this provision in the NDAA, we can protect our troops with higher-quality equipment, strengthen our industrial base, and reduce dependence on foreign supply chains.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to continuing our work together on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nikki Budzinski".

Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress