

July 1, 2026

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual
Property, Artificial Intelligence,
and the Internet
United States House
of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hank Johnson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual
Property, Artificial Intelligence,
and the Internet
United States House
of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), we thank you for holding the hearing “A Midlife Crisis? IP and the Internet After 40” on June 30 before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet to discuss intellectual property protection and enforcement challenges, including fraudulent websites and dangerous counterfeits.¹

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. Representing more than 1,100 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its more than 3.5 million U.S. workers, and its contribution of more than \$509 billion in annual U.S. retail sales. Brand protection remains a core strategic pillar for the association.²

As discussed during the hearing, the United States has been a leader in protecting intellectual property (IP) and has the chance to again lead by example to combat counterfeits and enhance IP protection, including:

- Advocating for the reintroduction and passage of the SHOP SAFE Act (S. 2934/ H.R.8684) in the 119th Congress to require all online platforms to meet the same requirements as brick-and-mortar retailers to not sell or promote counterfeit or illicit products.³ We have appreciated the leadership of the Chair and Ranking Member on this much-needed policy across previous Congresses;
- Calling on Congress and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to find new solutions to address the growing epidemic of fraudulent websites⁴ and exploring pre-verification of paid advertisements across platforms to sever the fraud impacting American consumers;
- Calling on all stakeholders to follow through on the commitment to transparency and accountability as directed by the INFORM Consumers Act (15 U.S.C. § 45f), exploring any needs for technical clarifications to ensure enforcement continues and expanding the law to include all third-party sellers—not just high-volume sellers;

¹ “A Midlife Crisis? IP and the Internet After 40” <https://judiciary.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/midlife-crisis-ip-and-internet-after-40>

² AAFA’s Brand Protection Council: https://www.aafaglobal.org/AAFA/Priority/Brand_Protection.aspx

³ SHOP SAFE Act Coalition Endorsement Letter for House Introduction

https://www.aafaglobal.org/AAFA/AAFA_News/2024_Letters_and_Comments/SHOP_SAFE_Act_Coalition_Endorsement_Letter_for_House_Introduction.aspx

⁴ The Rising Risk of Fraudulent Websites https://www.aafaglobal.org/AAFA/Solutions_Pages/Rising_Risk_%20Fraudulent%20_Websites.aspx

- Encouraging passage of S.2677/ H.R. 4930 to authorize Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to clarify and expand CBP’s authority to share key IP-related information with rights holders and other relevant stakeholders; and,
- Urging sustained funding of key intellectual property offices, priorities, and policies preventing counterfeit products from entering U.S. homes—thereby safeguarding innovation, business competitiveness, and the livelihoods of American workers.

Today, the danger of counterfeits⁵ goes beyond a counterfeit item posted on a platform, expanding to dupe influencers, fraudulent advertisements, fraudulent websites, and more—across the online Digital Devalue Chain of Counterfeits®,⁶ impacting our economy and national security.⁷ We must take a more holistic approach to consumer protection and to safeguarding intellectual property, innovation, and the jobs that support our economy here at home.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hanks

Jennifer Hanks
Senior Director, Brand Protection
American Apparel & Footwear Association

⁵ AAFA Study Finds 41 Percent of Counterfeit Apparel, Footwear, and Accessory Products Tested Failed Product Safety Standards
https://www.aafaglobal.org/AAFA/AAFA_News/2026_Press_Releases/AAFA_Study_41_Percent_Counterfeit_Products_Test_Failed_Safety.aspx

⁶ The Digital Devalue Chain of Counterfeits®
<https://www.aafaglobal.org/counterfeitdevaluechain>

⁷ AAFA Files 2025 Notorious Markets Comments to USTR
https://www.aafaglobal.org/AAFA/AAFA_News/2025_Letters_and_Comments/AAFA_Files_2025_Notorious_Markets_Comments_to_USTR.aspx