

From: **FDRA** tcrockett@fdra.org
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FDRA Advocacy Efforts and Strategy is Paying Major Dividends on Capitol Hill Update on Trade Promotion Authority Below

We at FDRA are happy to report some major steps forward for the footwear industry this past month.

At the start of 2015, FDRA devised a new advocacy strategy for the industry, including enhancing the industry's voice, making it louder and sharper, and expanding its message by hiring a director of government relations and a former Member of Congress as strategic policy advisor. Our efforts are now bearing fruit on Capitol Hill and across D.C.

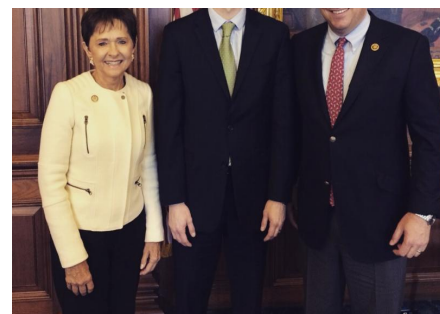
Over 1,800 Letters

Over the month of March, footwear industry executives, directors and professionals sent over 1,800 letters to Members of Congress through FDRA's online advocacy software. One director emailed FDRA, "This is great! The software was simple to use and effective - I already got a letter back from my Senator." These letters are extremely important because they show Representatives there are constituents who care about trade and the jobs trade creates back in their home district. These letters are also a great grassroots force multiplier to the multitude of calls and meetings we are holding with policymakers on a daily basis.

As a former Member of Congress, our strategic policy advisor Sue Myrick has more personal access to Senators and Members of Congress than most anyone in Washington, D.C. which is precisely why we brought



in Washington, D.C., which is precisely why we brought her onboard. In March she had personal conversations with top Senators and House Leadership about the industry's legislative priorities and the need for TPP. She even had a meeting with the Speaker of the House John Boehner. This access is leading to results other associations cannot boast about.



[FDRA Letter Goes Viral On Capitol Hill](#)

A coalition of hundreds of trade groups in support of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) recognized FDRA this month for its innovative advocacy efforts. In its members spotlight, the business coalition highlighted an advocacy letter that went viral on Capitol Hill as critical to helping generate support for trade in Congress.

The letter was written by FDRA Strategic Policy Advisor Sue Myrick to the largest voting bloc in Congress, the Republican Study Committee (RSC), urging them to support TPA to advance trade agreements that will strengthen the footwear industry ([TPP alone providing \\$450 million in industry savings](#)).

The letter was circulated at the RSC Members Meeting and was emailed out afterwards. To date it has been passed across Republican offices and pro-trade Democrat offices on Capitol Hill. The letter is significant because Myrick is a former chair of the RSC and she supported TPA the last time conservatives voted en masse for it in 2002. She continues to have strong relationships with members of the RSC, a group critical to TPA passage. This letter greatly magnified and explained to Congressional leaders the challenges the industry faces, at the same time when footwear workers were sending in their letters.

In addition, FDRA has also been connecting with members of the [New Democrat Coalition](#) about how trade supports 1 in 5 jobs nationwide and how important TPA and TPP are to create new footwear jobs. These meetings have been fruitful so far and we have gotten a very positive reception from several member offices.

Having both a hugely active grassroots push from the industry around the country as well as high-level engagements on the Hill has been a game changer. We hear it and see it on the Hill and around DC. **Advocacy for our industry has never been stronger - a great story we are proud to share. This is a great start to 2015 - but the battle is just starting.**

[Trade Promotion Authority Update](#)

All of this has come at a time when TPA (the key to TPP approval) is about to be introduced in the Senate. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) is currently working with Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) to reach an agreement on bipartisan legislation to give the President TPA. *In mid-April, we anticipate TPA legislation will be introduced in both Houses of Congress.* This bill will have to be approved by the congressional committees that oversee trade policy, and then it will go before the full House and Senate for a vote. This critical vote will likely take place close to the FDRA Innovation Summit in May.

That is why we need you to continue to remain engaged by asking colleagues and friends to use our [advocacy software](#). **We also ask you to please attend the [Footwear Innovation Summit in DC](#) on May 7th - this is perfect timing as we try to**

positively impact the Senate debate on TPA.

We will invite your representatives to come and meet with you at the May 7th Summit. One of the key focuses of the summit is helping explain to Congressional leaders and policymakers how footwear tariffs amount to a major innovation tax on companies and our customers. We will have an 'innovation wall' where footwear samples will be tagged with tariff rates to help you tell your story on how they impact your business and prevent job creation and innovative advances.



Footwear Innovation Summit
May 7, 2015
Washington, DC

FDRA
FOOTWEAR DISTRIBUTORS AND RETAILERS OF AMERICA

Network with the footwear industry's top executives as we discuss how innovation is changing our industry and the way we do business.

Tell Congress To Support Trade!

Use FDRA's advocacy software and send a pre-written letter to your Senators and Member of Congress asking them to support and strengthen the footwear industry by supporting TPA.

[Click here and make your voice heard!](#)

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