

FDRA Hosts Second Successful Sneaker Day on the Hill, Celebrating Footwear Innovation and Industry Leaders

The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) and the bipartisan [Congressional Sneaker Caucus](#) proudly hosted their Second Annual Sneaker Day on the Hill on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. This event brought together lawmakers, industry leaders, and shoe enthusiasts to celebrate the vibrant culture of sneakers and discuss critical issues affecting the footwear industry. It was a moment of bipartisan fun and collaboration where close to 100 House and Senate members and congressional staff got together to show off their shoes, have conversations, and celebrate the impact of sneakers on culture.

The day began with an insightful session led by **Dr. D'Wayne Edwards** in the Capitol, where attendees gained valuable insights into the latest trends and innovations in the footwear industry. Dr. Edwards discussed key topics such as footwear design, innovation, education, expanding opportunities, and the importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). With no formal education, Dr. Edwards started his career as an entry-level footwear designer for LA Gear at 19. Over three decades, he has received numerous accolades, including the Red Dot Award and the President's Volunteer of Service Award from President Barack Obama. He founded PENSOLE, the premier footwear design school in the world, which has partnered with top brands like Nike and Adidas. He also launched the Black Footwear Forum.

Sneaker Day on the Hill participants gathered in the Lincoln Room for a group photo, followed by the presentation of prizes for the five best sneakers. The winners were selected based on their unique designs and impact on the sneaker community. This event segment highlighted the footwear industry's creativity and passion, drawing attention from various sectors.

"This event showcased the incredible talent and creativity within the footwear industry. We are thrilled to see such a strong turnout and engagement from Members of Congress and industry leaders," said **Matt Priest, President & CEO of FDRA**. "The collaboration and enthusiasm observed yesterday highlighted the significant role of footwear in our culture and economy, advancing the crucial discussion on the current impact of tariffs on the market and its implications for consumers and retailers."

Sneaker Day on the Hill also provided a platform for discussing current issues in the footwear industry with congressional members and staff. These conversations are crucial to ensuring that the industry's voice is heard in legislative discussions, highlighting the importance of creative and engaging events like this to foster dialogue.

Rep. Jared Moskowitz (FL-23) said, "There's a huge amount of people who wear sneakers around the Capitol. As new members enter Congress and our workplace gets younger, I think that's bringing a new culture and style to the Hill. The Sneaker Caucus idea was forged as a bipartisan way to get people in the room to talk about something else other than politics so that we can learn something about each other. Both this year and last year's Sneaker Days had great turnout, and this most recent one was another successful opportunity to put our best foot forward and build bridges."

Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (OR-05) said, "As co-chair of the Congressional Sneaker Caucus, I'm proud of the bipartisan spirit that Sneaker Day brings to the Hill. This event not only highlights the incredible innovation within the footwear industry but also underscores its significant impact on our economy and everyday lives. It's inspiring to see industry leaders and lawmakers come together to discuss the challenges and opportunities we face, particularly in light of current market dynamics. Events like these are crucial for fostering collaboration and driving progress."

The event was marked by significant bipartisan participation and engagement, reflecting the robust support for the footwear industry from both the private and public sectors. FDRA representing over 95% of the footwear industry, including most U.S. footwear manufacturers, brands, retailers, and importers, continues to play a crucial role in advocating for the industry's interests. As you'll see, we had a ton of fun celebrating sneakers in a bipartisan way.

About FDRA: The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America is governed and directed by footwear executives and is the only trade organization focused solely on the footwear industry. Serving the full footwear supply chain, it boosts its members' bottom lines through innovative products, training, consulting on footwear design and development, sourcing and compliance, trade and customs, advocacy, and consumer and sales trend analysis for shoe retailers around the world. FDRA supports 500 companies and brands worldwide, representing 95% of the total U.S. footwear industry.