



Footwear & Politics

By Thomas Crockett • Dec 05, 2025

Smart Brevity® count: 2 mins...507 words

A few quick updates below on FDRA’s testimony on the USMCA and next week’s digital sample review.


FDRA testifies on the USMCA



FDRA testified this week before the Trump administration on the six-year review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement (USMCA). In 2026, all three countries must decide whether they will renew the agreement and make changes to it.

[Read the testimony](#)

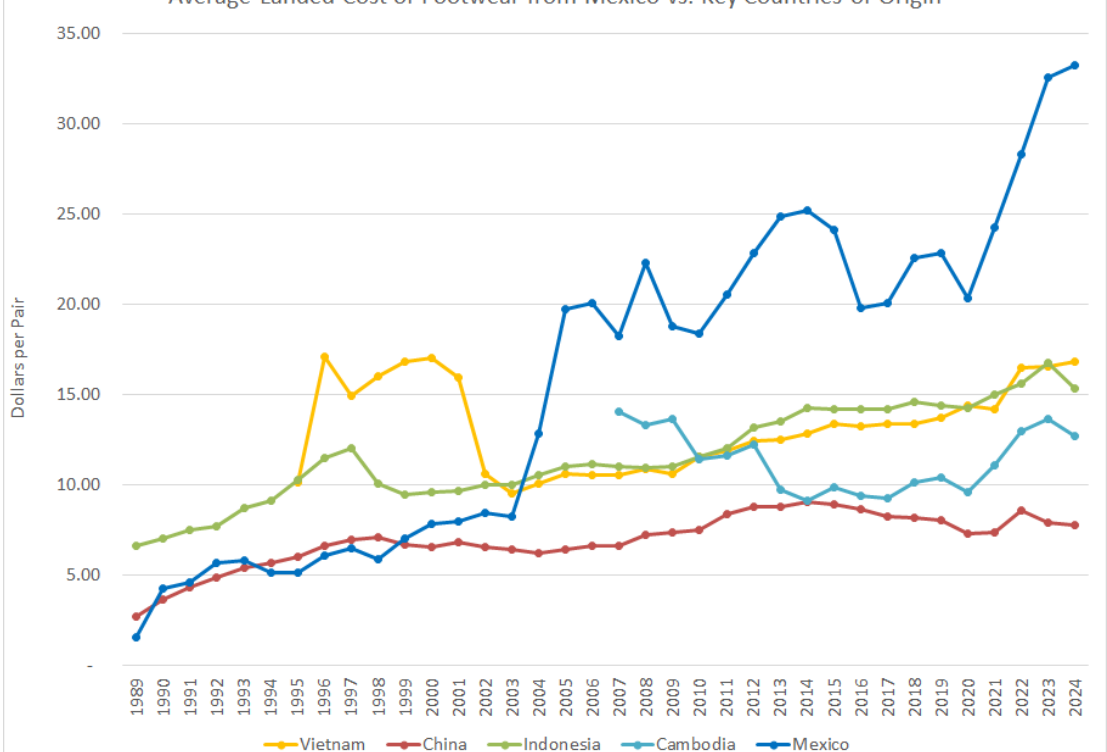
A few highlights from FDRA’s testimony below:

🇲🇽 Why the USMCA matters: Mexico consistently ranks as the number six supplier of footwear to the U.S. It is the world’s third largest supplier of  boots to the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere’s largest by far.

- Sourcing from Mexico can significantly reduce product cycles and lead times, which generates savings for U.S. companies that they can reinvest back into U.S. jobs and innovation.
- **Our argument:** The U.S. should extend the agreement and prevent new added tariffs from being placed on our USMCA partners.

! Yes, but: The USMCA is not fully realized when it comes to footwear. One key reason is because the USMCA, and its predecessor NAFTA, adopted the most stringent rules of origin for footwear of any U.S. free trade agreement.

- Companies must meet a strict 55% regional value content requirement. This adds to the many challenges facing companies that want to source in Mexico, which has the highest landed costs of any major U.S. footwear producing country (see below).
- **Our argument:** The U.S. should lower this high threshold to make Mexico a more favorable sourcing location in light of all the sourcing challenges. It would give companies much-needed flexibility and help shift some footwear sourcing to the Western Hemisphere.




FDRA Sample Review next Thursday



Be sure to join us for our [digital sample review](#) with CBP Footwear National Import Specialist Stacey Kalkines on Thursday, December 11th (the event was moved from the original date due to the government shutdown).

👉 Important update: *This year’s event will provide continuing education credit for customs professionals. This FDRA event is worth 3 Continuing Education Units (CEUs)!*

Why it matters: Stacey is THE footwear classification decision maker at CBP, and this is a great opportunity to ask her questions in an off-the-record setting. We don’t record the sample review, so you want to be there live.

- There are more than **! 400** ways to classify a shoe, and small changes mean a huge difference in tariff rates — and 💰 costs for companies!
- **Take note: Please email pictures of your  footwear samples to me at tcrockett@fdra.org as soon as possible.** We need to get the deck to Stacey Monday for her to review. We will discuss each sample with the expert panel live during the event.

🇺🇸 Oh, also: CBP’s Apparel, Footwear & Textiles Center team will join us to talk about the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), IP protection, and recent enforcement trends.

Go deeper: sign up here: [Digital Tariff & Customs Conference](#)

Thanks for reading this week’s Footwear & Politics update. Feel free to share this newsletter with others on your team. Have a great rest of the week!

Thomas

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