

PRESS RELEASE | May 6, 2026

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## **FDRA Testifies Before USTR, Warns Footwear Industry ‘Cannot Absorb Another Round of Tariffs’**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA)** testified before the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) as part of the Section 301 investigation into structural excess capacity across multiple economies. **FDRA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Thomas Crockett** appeared on the first panel to deliver testimony on behalf of the U.S. footwear industry.

Statement from **Matt Priest, President & CEO, FDRA:**

“FDRA appreciates the opportunity to testify before USTR, but we’ll be direct: the footwear industry cannot absorb another round of tariffs. Americans buy more than 2 billion pairs of shoes a year, and footwear already carries an average tariff rate of 12 percent — six times the rate on most consumer goods, with kids’ shoes reaching 48 percent or higher before any new tariffs are even applied. In 2025 alone, duties more than doubled, and consumers are already feeling it.”

“Our industry did exactly what policymakers asked — investing years and significant capital to move production out of China and into new markets across Southeast Asia. It worked. China’s share of U.S. footwear imports dropped from 87 percent in 2009 to 48 percent last year. Expanding Section 301 actions to the very countries companies moved to doesn’t address the underlying trade challenges — it punishes compliance, creates uncertainty, and shifts the burden onto American consumers and small businesses.

“We urge USTR to pursue trade policies that strengthen competitiveness without placing unnecessary costs on families already stretched thin.”

For more information about [FDRA](#) or to schedule an interview with Matt Priest on the state of the footwear industry, please email [fdracomms@cgagroup.com](mailto:fdracomms@cgagroup.com)

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### **About FDRA**

FDRA 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 98% of the total U.S. footwear industry. Learn more: [fdra.org](http://fdra.org)