FDRA FOOTWEAR DISTRIBUTORS & RETAILERS OF AMERICA

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FDRA: Inflation, Tariffs Put Added Pressure on Families During Back-to-School Shopping

Footwear industry says tariffs add costs to essential purchases as families continue to face affordability pressures

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) today said the July Consumer Price Index (CPI) underscores continued affordability pressures facing American families during the back-to-school shopping season, as inflation and higher tariffs increase costs across the footwear supply chain.

Consumer prices rose again in July, marking the 64th consecutive month inflation has exceeded the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target. Footwear prices increased year-over-year for the eighth straight month, while women's footwear prices posted one of their fastest annual increases in nearly four years. The latest data reinforces concerns that pricing pressures continue to build throughout the footwear supply chain even as some input costs begin to stabilize.

> "Families are already dealing with higher costs for housing, groceries and other necessities, and now they're seeing those pressures when they shop for back-to-school shoes," said **Matt Priest, President and CEO of FDRA**. "July's numbers show footwear prices continuing to move higher, with some categories seeing their strongest price increases in years. While footwear companies have worked hard to absorb rising costs, tariffs are making that increasingly difficult. Shoes already face some of the highest tariffs of any consumer product, and additional duties only add pressure to prices at a time when families can least afford it."

Footwear entered the current tariff environment already carrying a significantly higher tax burden than most consumer products. While tariffs on consumer goods average just over 2 percent, footwear tariffs average more than 12 percent. Tariffs on some children's shoes can reach nearly 50 percent, even before additional tariffs are applied. U.S. footwear companies now pay more than $5 billion annually in tariffs to the federal government.

The latest inflation data comes as consumers are already bracing for higher footwear costs. According to the recent FDRA-AlixPartners Back-to-School Consumer and Executive Footwear Survey, half of consumers expect footwear prices to rise over the next six months, while one-third plan to purchase fewer pairs than last year. July's CPI data showed footwear prices rising for the eighth consecutive month on a year-over-year basis, with women's footwear prices accelerating again and recording one of their fastest increases in nearly four years.

> "Parents can't tell their kids to stop growing because shoes cost more," Priest said. "Back-to-school shoes aren't a luxury purchase. They're something families have to buy, which is why policies that add unnecessary costs to footwear hit household budgets particularly hard."

The FDRA-AlixPartners research also found that consumers are increasingly prioritizing quality and durability over quantity, while lower-income households expect to reduce spending. Those findings point to growing sensitivity to prices as families make purchasing decisions during one of the busiest footwear shopping periods of the year.

"The data makes clear that price pressures haven't disappeared," Priest said. "Footwear is an everyday necessity for working families, students and growing children. Policymakers should be looking for ways to lower costs, not add to them. Reducing the tariff burden on shoes would provide meaningful relief at a time when inflation continues to strain household budgets.".

For more information about FDRA or to schedule an interview with Matt Priest, please email 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**