



Leo W. Gerard
International President

July 24, 2006

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

I write today to bring your attention to a critical piece of legislation, The Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act (H.R. 5635). Recently introduced, this groundbreaking legislation has the power to incorporate the values of dignity and respect for human rights in our trade relationships.

For far too long, our trade agreements have focused on corporate protections while ignoring the lives of human beings within our global economy. As a result, products reaching American soil often come with the taint of being produced in inhumane conditions. Many workers making products destined for U.S. shelves do not have the option of rejecting forced labor, unsafe conditions, indecent pay, discrimination, or other violations of their rights. Instead, they are caught by the dark side of global trade that promotes horrendous working conditions to swell corporate bottom lines.

We can do better – and we must.

Consumers have a right to know the products they purchase are not produced in sweatshop conditions. Businesses have the right to compete fairly, and not with companies that engage in worker abuses. Shareholders have the right to invest with the knowledge that they are not supporting sweatshop practices. And, most importantly, workers around the globe have the right to earn a living without the degradation of toiling in inhumane conditions.

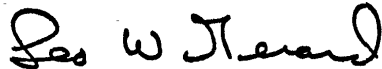
The Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act simply states that if products are made in sweatshop conditions, they are not welcome in our markets. A product is considered a sweatshop good if it is produced under conditions that do not meet core labor standards. These standards include having the rights to associate, organize and bargain collectively; prohibiting forced and child labor; and adhering to basic, acceptable conditions of work as they relate to wages, safety and health standards, and hours of work.

This bill is rooted in previously enacted legislation. The Dog and Cat Protection Act of 2000 prohibits importing or exporting dog and cat fur products. The goal of this

act was to deter the brutality and suffering inflicted upon dogs and cats, whose fur was being used for products such as coats that were entering our markets. Is it not time to extend these same protections to human beings?

This Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act is a proactive step we can take to bring justice to our trade relationships. I hope you will join me and over 850,000 Steelworker members in supporting this legislation. **Please show your support by becoming a cosponsor today.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leo" being the most prominent.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

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