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HOUSE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

April 29, 2013

Kevin M. Burke
President and CEO
The American Apparel & Footwear Association
1601 North Kent Street #1200
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Burke:

I am writing to express my outrage at the recent deadly building collapse that occurred at Rana Plaza near Dhaka, Bangladesh. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I am deeply worried about working conditions at garment factories in Bangladesh and throughout the region. While I fully understand that American companies and foreign direct investment stimulates the local economy and provides jobs, it is the moral responsibility of American companies that procure goods within the country to ensure their suppliers operate safe factories.

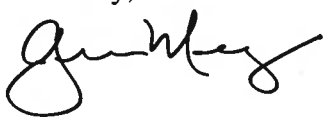
This tragic incident in Bangladesh, along with the Tazreen Factory fire in November of 2012, demonstrates the long overdue need for effective safety inspections, better working conditions and accountable supply chains. While the arrest of the factory owner at Rana Plaza is an important step in providing justice for victims and their families, companies must focus on preventative measures so these tragedies are avoided in the future. In just these two incidents, over five hundred people have died on crowded factory floors in Bangladesh because of deplorable working and safety conditions. In light of recent reporting by the Human Rights Watch, which states there are only 18 inspectors for the nearly 100,000 factories in and around Dhaka, I have no doubt that other workers are at grave risk of injury and death.

Before another senseless tragedy occurs, I urge American companies contracting with factories in Bangladesh to take a leading role in protecting their subcontracted employees abroad. American companies should demand that their contracted suppliers correct all safety violations and dismiss any contractor that places people's lives at risk. Furthermore, they should be aware

that American consumers and policy makers expect them to be accountable for their supply chains and will judge them as such in the future.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this very serious matter.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Identical copies of this letter have been sent to the following:

Glenn Murphy
Chief Executive Officer
GAP Global Headquarters
San Francisco
2 Folsom St.
San Francisco, CA 94105

Mr. Michael T. Duke
Chief Executive Officer
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Bentonville, AR 72716