



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. and Central American Textile and Apparel Groups Send Letter to Vice President Kamala Harris on CAFTA-DR Rules and China 301 Tariffs

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WASHINGTON –The main textile and apparel manufacturing trade groups in the United States and Central America sent a joint letter to Vice President Kamala Harris today, outlining critical issues, such as upholding strong rules of origin in the U.S. free trade agreement with the region and maintaining China 301 tariffs on finished apparel imports, ahead of the Summit of the Americas taking place in Los Angeles next week.

The National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), representing the full spectrum of U.S. textiles from fiber through finished sewn products, and the Central America – Dominican Republic Apparel and Textile Council (CECATEC), the main apparel and textile group in the region, thanked Harris for her leadership in helping drive more investment to northern Central America and for the Biden administration’s commitment to strengthening the economic partnership forged between the United States and the region, which supports 1 million collective textile and apparel jobs.

“Perhaps most critical for our collective industries is the administration’s [strong support](#) for the “yarn forward” rule of origin in the U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), which promotes trade, investment and economic development in the United States and the region. This ensures the benefits of the agreement go to the partners in the agreement, which helps drive massive investment and certainty,” the groups stated in the letter. “The agreement’s strong rules have brought trade and investment to the region and the U.S. and allowed us to compete against highly subsidized industries in Asia often employing illegal trade practices such as the use of forced labor.”

“We continue to urge the administration to hold highly subsidized economies accountable for predatory trade practices that have blatantly undermined our collective industries and our workers. It is critical for the administration to continue to ensure the 301 tariffs remain on finished apparel products that have helped bring diversification in sourcing from Asia and provided opportunities for both U.S. and Central American workers,” they noted. “The tariffs are playing a key role in unlocking investment in the region and the U.S.”

See the full letter [here](#).

NCTO is a Washington, DC-based trade association that represents domestic textile manufacturers.

- U.S. employment in the textile supply chain was 534,000 in 2021.
- The value of shipments for U.S. textiles and apparel was \$65.2 billion in 2021.

- U.S. exports of fiber, textiles and apparel were \$28.4 billion in 2021.
- Capital expenditures for textiles and apparel production totaled \$1.85 billion in 2020, the last year for which data is available.

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