June 10th, 2013

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
Senate Dirksen Building 413
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins,

I am writing to thank you for introducing legislation to ensure that the Department of Defense comply with current law and fulfill their needs for athletic footwear from domestic manufacturers. Your leadership on this issue will help close a loophole in the Berry Amendment and ensure that our warfighters have the best possible athletic footwear to support their training requirements.

Our company, Bates Footwear, has been manufacturing footwear for the Armed Forces for 130 years. Our manufacturing is based in Big Rapids, Michigan and one of our largest suppliers of leather is located in Hartland, Maine. We have been investing heavily in research and development to be able to deliver a completely Berry-compliant athletic shoe that supports the rigorous demands of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.

Bates Footwear is a division of Wolverine World Wide, and our sister brands include Merrell and Saucony, both brands who are renowned for their technical capabilities and for their excellent athletic footwear products. We anticipate that we will be building our footwear here in the United States and marketing these products to the military using these two well-known brands.

The passage of this legislation will improve the footwear available to our Armed Forces and directly affect our ability to retain and grow manufacturing jobs here in Michigan and at our suppliers throughout the United States.

Please contact David Costello, who manages our public affairs, if we may help support your efforts in any way. Thank you again for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Onder Ors
President
Bates Footwear