



CFDA VISITS CONGRESS AS DESIGN PIRACY PROHIBITION ACT IS REINTRODUCED

Bill Offers Greater Protection for United States' \$350 Billion Fashion Business

April 23 2009 – New York. Yesterday, CFDA executive director Steven Kolb, accompanied by designers Narciso Rodriguez, Thakoon Panichgul, Maria Cornejo, and Jason Wu, spent the day in Washington D.C. lobbying Congress to support the Design Piracy Prohibition Act (DPPA) and celebrating its reintroduction by Representatives Delahunt, Nadler and Goodlatte in the U.S. House of Representatives.

During their visit, the group met with key members of Congress that oversee copyright legislation. The day concluded with a reception hosted by the designers at The Capitol Visitors Center.

The legislation is being re-introduced at a time when American fashion designers have become some of the most sought-after in the world. America is the world's fashion leader and a \$350 billion a year business. And, yet it is the only industrialized country that does not provide protection for fashion design.

Difficult economic times have hit fashion perhaps even harder than many other sectors of America's economy. Coupled with piracy from foreign importers, the economic reality for American designers, most of whom are small businesses, is catastrophic. The Design Piracy Prohibition Act will protect both established and up-and-coming designers whose development, growth and success helps to support the industry.

Design Piracy describes the increasingly prevalent practice of enterprises that seek to profit from the invention of others by re-producing copies of original designs. Pirates are stealing American designs, then making low-quality copies with cheap labor and importing them into the U.S. to compete with the original designs. These duplicate versions have the potential to flood the market and devalue the originals by their ubiquity, poor quality, or speed at which they reach the consumer. This is currently legal under U.S. law because fashion design is not protected.



Last year Congress enhanced the ability to enforce laws against counterfeits – pirated designs with a fake label - but pirated fashion designs with no label remain unprotected in the U.S. Design piracy is simply counterfeiting without the label.

Kolb stressed the importance of the bill, saying "American designers should be afforded the same protection that other creative industries like music and film are given. Original design ideas are as much intellectual property to a designer as lyrics and notes are to a musician. Without protection the very foundation of their business are at risk."

"Coupled with piracy from foreign importers, the economic reality for American designers, most of whom are small businesses, is catastrophic," he added. "This downturn also hurts industries that support fashion including printing, trucking, distribution, magazine publishers, advertising, publicity, merchandising, and retail. America's designers are some of the most creative in the world. Their creativity can help fuel America's economic comeback but they need to be protected against the hijacking of their creations by pirates. The Design Piracy Protection Act is a true stimulus for the Fashion Industry."

Press contact:

Souri Kim / KCD