

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 12, 2012

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

Last month, a fire in the Tazreen Fashions, Ltd. factory in Bangladesh killed 112 people. Following the tragedy, it came to light that the workers were ordered to stay at their sewing machines after fire alarms went off, were trapped inside because exit doors were locked, and were unable to fight the fire because fire extinguishers inside the plant did not work.

While the scale of this tragedy is appalling in itself, the fact that this factory was making licensed apparel bearing U.S. Marine Corps logos for a U.S. Government contractor compounds the misfortune. Softe, a subsidiary of Delta Apparel, is an outfitter for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. As shown in the attached photos from the factory, in July, Softe placed an order for apparel bearing Marine Corps logos in the Tazreen factory where 112 workers lost their lives.

Needless to say, it is unacceptable for products made for members of our military or bearing the symbols of our armed forces, and sold at base exchanges around the world, to be sub-contracted out to factories that do not have even the most minimal worker protections. To do so contradicts the very best ideals of our country and the service members who fight to protect and promote these ideals around the world.

We applaud the Marine Corps for acting quickly to terminate its licensing agreement with Softe. However, it should not take the deaths of 112 people to demand accountability. Furthermore, this is an issue that goes beyond the Marine Corps. More needs to be done to assure greater transparency and accountability in the supply chains of *all* U.S. Government contractors and licensees. The Marine Corps should lead by example and make certain that their supply contracts and licensing agreements do not have provisions that may make it easy for manufacturers to hide the source of their product, such as only affixing a logo at U.S. factories.

For this reason, we urge you to use all the tools at your disposal to ensure that the federal government does not pursue or continue contracts or licensing agreements with prime contractors, sub-contractors, or licensees that fail to guarantee basic and fundamental rights for their workers and throughout their supply chains, including the right to a safe workplace. It is too late to undo this terrible tragedy, but we have a moral imperative to do what we can to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

Sincerely,



Senator Tom Harkin



Senator Al Franken

Sherrod Brown

Senator Sherrod Brown

Patty Murray

Senator Patty Murray

Jeff Bingaman

Senator Jeff Bingaman

John D. Rockefeller IV

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV

George Miller

Representative George Miller