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S. 1816	Aug. 4, 1983 Part II	S11775

Action:

Introduced by Mr. Thurmond

By Mr. THURMOND:

S. 1816. A bill to amend the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act, the Tariff Act of 1930, and the Wool Products Labeling Act of 1939 to improve the labeling of textile fiber and wool products; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

TEXTILE FIBER AND WOOL PRODUCTS IDENTIFICATION ACT

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I am today introducing legislation that is directed at strengthening domestic law as it relates to country of origin labeling requirements for textile products.

There are presently several laws that require clear marking of textile products entering the United States as to their country of origin. The Textile Fiber Products Identification Act and the Tariff Act of 1930 provide that the country of origin be affixed to the textile product in a clear and conspicuous manner. Nevertheless, there have been increasing instances where textiles and apparel products are entering the United States in violation of domestic labeling laws.

One of the major problems in enforcement of existing law is the fact that labels are often placed in inconspicuous places. This bill would designate that the label be attached to the most conspicuous place as the inner side of the product. This will allow easy identification of the label by consumers and will help with enforcement of present textile agreements.

Mr. President, there is no requirement in present law for a label denoting domestic manufacture of a textile/apparel product. The consuming public must infer that a textile/apparel product is made in the United States if it does not specifically say it is manufactured in a foreign country on the garment label. The bill I am introducing today would require that the product be labeled as having been made in the United States if it were produced in this country. Studies have shown that U.S. consumers prefer to buy American-made textile products. By mandating that textile products made in this country be labeled to that effect, we will be helping consumers to identify textile goods made in this country.

Mr. President, another provision of the bill would require that both the textile product, as well as the package in which it is contained, be labeled as to country of origin. There have been numerous instances where bulk shipments have been made to the United States and the packages have been properly marked. However, once the packages are opened, the individual products have not been labeled and therefore have appeared on retail counters without required labeling. In the case of packaging that is transparent in nature where the label could be read through the package, it would not be required that the bulk container be marked as to the country of origin.

Mr. President, the final major feature of the bill would mandate that catalog sale descriptions and other advertisements for textile products contain country of origin information. While there has been FTC rulings to the effect that catalog sale offerings include country of origin material, it is not provided for in the statute itself, and the regulation in many cases has gone unenforced.

Mr. President, I realize that this is a complex subject and that my bill touches on only a few of the major problems that exist in the area of textile labeling. However, I feel that it is extremely important that the groundwork be laid toward resolving some of these problems. We must clarify our labeling laws in order to give consumers every opportunity to buy American-made products. I hope that this legislation will have a full and expeditious review at the committee stage, so that it can be considered by the full Senate in the near future.