



ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIR  
SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY, COCHAIR

July 10, 2023

Mr. Steve Richman  
Group President  
Milwaukee Tool  
13135 West Lisbon Road  
Brookfield, WI 53005-2550

Dear Mr. Richman,

We write to raise questions about forced labor used to make Milwaukee Tool products in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and your company's response to the possibility that U.S. consumers continue to buy such products made by political prisoners.

We raise these concerns after reading an investigative report by Wisconsin Watch which detailed how political prisoners in Chishan Prison were forced to work against their will, with little pay, to produce gloves for your company. Prisoners have included Chinese human rights advocate Cheng Yuan, who was arbitrarily detained by the PRC and is still incarcerated, and Taiwanese democracy activist Lee Ming-che, who was imprisoned in Chishan Prison for five years and released last year. Both men were detained for simply advocating for rights respected and protected in free societies around the world. Cheng Yuan spouse, Shi Minglei, has amassed evidence that political prisoners at Chishan Prison were forced to make gloves for Shanghai Select Safety Products, a supplier for Milwaukee Tool.

Forced labor in the PRC contravenes international human rights standards and China's international obligations. In April 2022, the PRC's National People's Congress Standing Committee ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (C029) and Abolition of Forced Labour Convention of 1957 (C105). C029 requires countries to prohibit the use of forced labor and make the use of forced labor "punishable as a penal offence." Countries that ratify C105 are prohibited from using forced labor "as a means of political coercion or education" or "as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination."

Further, as you know, importing products made with forced labor is a violation of U.S. law, which defines forced labor as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty for its nonperformance and for which the worker does not offer work or service voluntarily." Evidence of prison labor made goods from the PRC in global supply chains, however, keeps emerging—mostly from evidence provided by ex-prisoners and their family members.

We hope you can provide us with information about these reports and your company's reaction to them. The issue of forced labor in China, and the unfair trade advantage it offers companies like yours, is one that has plagued the U.S. economy for decades. We understand that Milwaukee Tool

may have strongly worded policies against the use of forced labor, as do most every company with global supply chains, but the evidence in this case is very compelling.

Milwaukee Tool gloves continue to be sold at Home Depot and on Amazon. American consumers should not be unwittingly subsidizing the PRC's human rights abuses. We ask that you respond to our questions below, as we are compiling information for future reports and a congressional hearing where we may request your testimony:

- Your company's policy on sustainability mentions renewable energy, environmental health, safety, and sustainability, but does not mention forced labor or human rights. Does your company have a global human rights policy? If not, why not?
- Has Milwaukee Tool investigated how its products reportedly came to be linked to prison forced labor in China, and if so, what conclusions did you reach?
- Has your company told Home Depot and Amazon to stop the sale of Milwaukee Tool brand gloves made by Shanghai Select Safety Products?
- Has Milwaukee Tool severed its relationships with Shanghai Select Safety Products?
- Given the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act addresses imports made with labor from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or coercive labor transfer programs elsewhere in China, how has your company mapped its supply chain in China, particularly as Uyghur labor is transported to factories in and around Shanghai and elsewhere in eastern China?
- Would you be willing to do scientific testing on products that use cotton or rayon, to ensure that they are not made from inputs from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where the PRC is conducting genocide?
- Has your company conducted due diligence assessments to identify and map out every level of your supply chain – including contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers, sub-suppliers, and all operations and business relationships in China? If so, can you share your findings with us?
- Can you confirm if workers in China across your supply chain are allowed to freely organize labor groups or conduct religious activities at their workplace?
- What monitoring mechanisms, if any, does Milwaukee Tool have in place to ensure that no goods made with forced labor are sold in stores and online?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these questions. We look forward to engaging with you on this timely and important issue.

Sincerely,



Representative Chris Smith  
Chair



Senator Jeff Merkley  
Cochair