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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS
LIQUOR CONTROL
TOURISM & RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS

February 28, 2018

**Department of Corrections
Secretary John Wetzel
1920 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

Dear Secretary Wetzel:

As Chairman of the Blue Lives Matter Caucus, I'm calling for an immediate and permanent ban on Timberland boots and other similar heavy-sole boots worn by inmates.

According to media reports, SCI-Somerset Corrections Officer Sgt. Mark Baserman was brutally attacked and later died after an inmate wearing Timberland boots kicked Baserman in the head, rendering him completely unresponsive. It's clear that the inmate used his boots as a weapon.

The State Department of Corrections announced yesterday that it has suspended the sale of heavy-sole work boots in prison commissaries, but hundreds of inmates still have them. We need to act NOW to get confiscate and destroy these boots, which pose such a deadly threat.

I stand with the state's prison guards, whose representative, Jason Bloom, told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, "They have since stopped allowing [inmates] to order Timberland boots, but that doesn't do me a damn bit of good. I'm looking for a drop-dead date, mark them as contraband, destroy them, and get them out of the institution. They don't need to be there. It's not like they're going around doing heavy equipment work. They don't need these boots inside an institution."

I am also calling for a comprehensive review of the rules regarding inmate attire. I would like answers as to what footwear inmates are allowed to wear and when the rules were last revised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Burns".

**Representative Frank Burns
Chairman, Blue Lives Matter Caucus**

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February 28, 2018

Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

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Representative Frank Burns
Chairman, Blue Lives Matter Caucus