

U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Scott: Introduce bipartisan legislation to promote transparency online and support Made in America goods and companies

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Rick Scott (R-FL) today introduced bipartisan legislation to ensure that all goods sold online list their country-of-origin in order to protect Americans’ right to know where the products they buy are made, and help promote goods that are made in America.

Unlike products sold in-person, products sold online are not currently required to disclose their country-of-origin. The Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) Online Act would increase transparency online by updating our labeling laws for the e-commerce era so online shoppers have the same access to country-of-origin and seller location information that in-person shoppers do. The legislation is also cosponsored by Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Kelly Loeffler (R-GA).

“Regardless of whether shopping online or in a store, Americans have a right to know whether the products they buy are being made right here in America, by American workers,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “With more and more consumers buying their goods online, we must ensure online retailers are being just as transparent as brick-and-mortar stores. My bipartisan legislation will fix our outdated labeling laws to promote transparency for Americans shopping online, and to help boost the American businesses and manufacturers selling their goods

through online retailers.”

“American consumers should know where the products they buy are made. Last year, I introduced the PRIME Act to require online retailers to list the country of origin for each product they sell, and I’m proud to partner with Senator Baldwin today on the COOL Online Act as we work to create more transparency in the online retail space so consumers can make informed choices for themselves and their families,” **said Senator Scott.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the urgency of this problem by radically reshaping American retail with consumers staying home and buying their goods online. E-commerce’s share of total retail sales has been steadily increasing each year, and the current pandemic is accelerating that trend. As e-commerce grows, it will pull more sales from brick-and-mortar retail locations, making big companies bigger, while threatening small businesses and mom-and-pop stores nationwide.

The COOL Online Act will update our labeling laws for the e-commerce era by amending the Federal Trade Commission Act. Specifically, the bill requires:

- The country-of-origin labeling for a product, as required by existing law, be clearly and conspicuously stated in the website’s description of the product
- Clear disclosure of the country in which the seller of the product is located (and, if applicable, the country in which any parent corporation of such seller is located) in the online product listing.

The COOL Online Act is supported by Alliance for American Manufacturing, Coalition for a Prosperous America, Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group and U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

“We applaud Senator Tammy Baldwin and Senator Rick Scott for introducing the Country of Origin Labeling Online Act. By giving online shoppers information about where a product is being made and where the seller is located, consumers will be well-positioned to support the U.S. economy and create more jobs for American workers. It is long overdue that Congress close this loophole and we are grateful to Senators Baldwin and Scott for leading the way,” **said Scott Paul, president of**

the Alliance for American Manufacturing.

“I moved to Wisconsin in 1986, when manufacturing was the historic backbone of the state economy, but since I have seen a sharp decline in middle-class manufacturing jobs. I believe a lot more could have been done in Washington then, and more should be done now to maintain a strong manufacturing base in the U.S.,” **said Noel Valdes, owner and founder of CobraHead in Cambridge, Wisconsin.** “Senator Baldwin’s COOL Online Act helps small family businesses like ours succeed, and pushes the U.S.A. in the right direction. This issue is personal for us. When we started our business, we made it our mission to manufacture CobraHead tools locally, instead of overseas, to ensure a high-quality product for our customers. An overseas firm with a cheap imitation of subpar-quality knocked off our flagship tool, and the online product description has no mention of its country of origin. We have lost several accounts as a result. Requiring prominent country of origin information on product listings would be a big boost to our mom-and-pop store.”

“The Coalition for a Prosperous America fully supports enactment of the Country of Origin Labeling Online Act, or COOL Online Act, sponsored by Senators Tammy Baldwin and Rick Scott. Consumers have a right to know where the products they purchase on the Internet are made and where the seller is located – and to know this when they buy them, not when they show up on their doorstep. By requiring this information in Internet sales, the bill will help consumers protect themselves against unsafe, counterfeit and shoddy goods, and, if they choose, to purchase products made in America. CPA urges the bill’s enactment into law,” **said Michael Stumo, CEO of Coalition for a Prosperous America.**

More information on the COOL Online Act is available [here](#).

Text of the legislation is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).

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