

**FDRA** FOOTWEAR DISTRIBUTORS & RETAILERS OF AMERICA  
**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DIGEST**

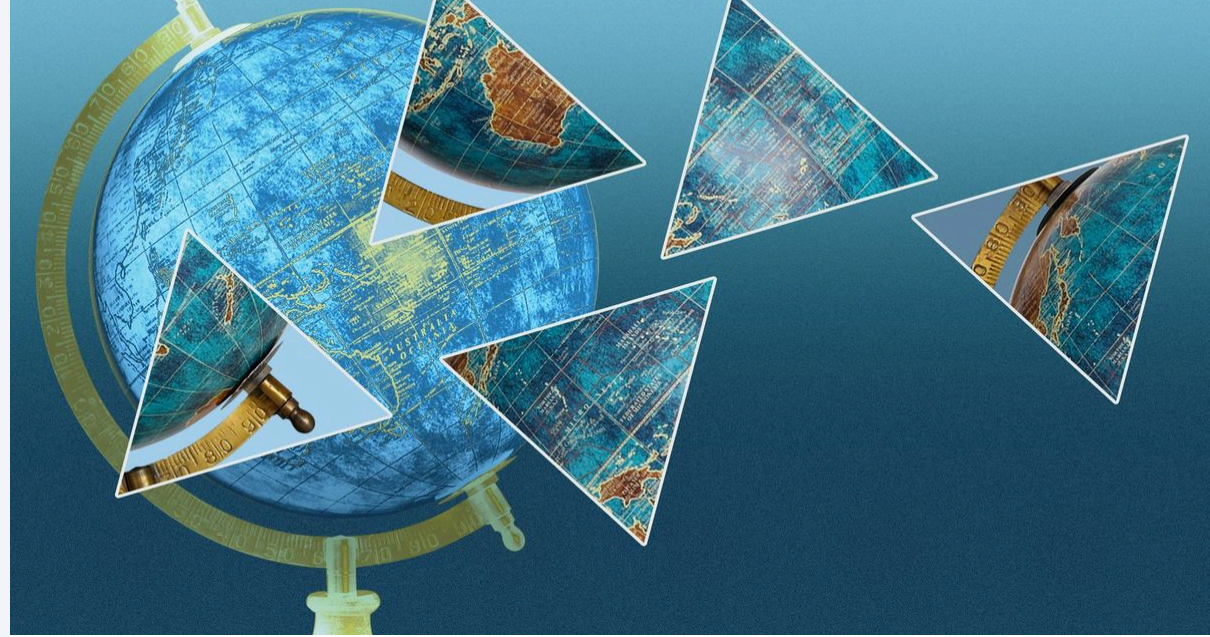
# IP Digest

By Thomas Crockett • May 04, 2026

Smart Brevity® count: 2 mins...510 words

A few quick updates on the annual global IP report, recent footwear patents and trademarks, and an FDRA website dedicated to fighting counterfeits.

## Global IP, tariffs, and counterfeits



The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) released the report for its annual review of intellectual property (IP) challenges in other countries, known as the Special 301 Review. FDRA has testified at the hearing for this report for nearly a decade.

**As we highlighted last week**, the report shockingly classified 🇻🇳 Vietnam as the highest level of concern for the U.S. when it comes to IP shortfalls ... higher than even 🇨🇳 China and 🇷🇺 Russia.

- **Take note:** This triggers ! automatic consideration for a new 301 investigation into Vietnam.
- **Go deeper:** Read our longer update [here](#).

**Why the report matters:** USTR uses the information in the report to engage with our trading partners to improve IP protection for U.S. brands in specific countries. A few key takeaways:

- **Top priorities for U.S. engagement:** The report removed 2 countries — 🇦🇷 Argentina and 🇲🇽 Mexico — from a priority watch list of countries with heightened IP concerns, bringing the total from 8 to 6 countries. The countries on that list are: 🇨🇱 Chile, 🇨🇳 China, 🇮🇳 India, 🇮🇩 Indonesia, 🇷🇺 Russia, and 🇻🇪 Venezuela.
- **EU now a concern?** USTR put 🇪🇺 the EU on a lower-level watch list.
- **What about footwear?** Footwear came up 6 times in the report. USTR called out 🇵🇰 Pakistan, 🇮🇩 Indonesia, 🇨🇴 Colombia, and 🇬🇹 Guatemala over concerns with counterfeit footwear.

**! More tariffs = more counterfeits?:** This year’s report did not explore a key issue we raised at the hearing— the fact that new tariffs can have the unintended consequence of driving more counterfeit goods into the U.S. market.

- **What we said:** “As consumers continue to see prices rise with new tariff increases, they will shift to lower priced alternatives. In difficult economic times, consumers will sacrifice quality for cheaper products that resemble well-known brands. This is an environment where counterfeiters thrive ... Counterfeiters have the advantage, because they operate outside the system.”

[Read the IP Report](#)

## Latest FDRA patent and trademark newsletters

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April 2026

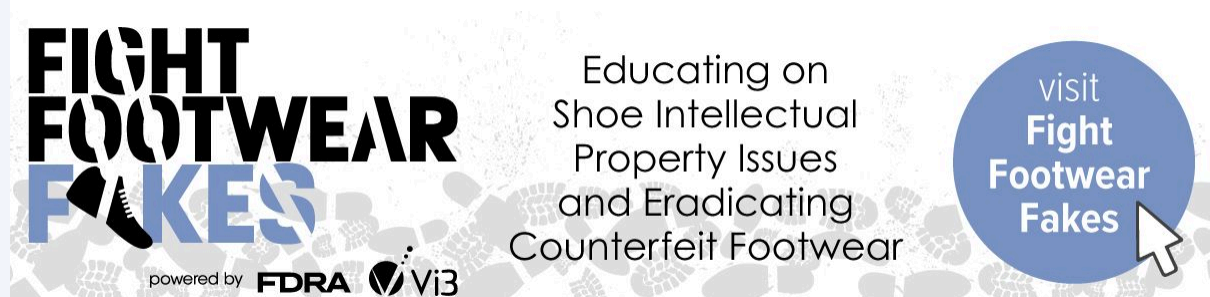
### Footwear Utility Patents Issued in March

Patent No.	Title	Assignee
<a href="#">18944388</a>	Sole Structure for Article of Footwear	NIKE, Inc.
<a href="#">18182564</a>	Cut Step Traction Element Arrangement for an Article of Footwear	Nike, Inc.
<a href="#">17675065</a>	Co-Molded 3D Elements	adidas AG
<a href="#">18792744</a>	Article of Footwear Having a Harness System	Under Armour, Inc.
<a href="#">17581456</a>	Shoe	HANN ATHLETIC, LLC
<a href="#">18480908</a>	Article Comprising a Knit Element	adidas AG
<a href="#">19005872</a>	Ballet Pointe Shoe	Drew Layne, LLC
<a href="#">18603795</a>	Electric Power Generating Footwear and Method of Charging Electronic Devices	N/A
<a href="#">17827221</a>	Sole Comprising a Reinforcing Structure, Shoe with Such a Sole, and Method for the Manufacture of Such Items	adidas AG
<a href="#">17743856</a>	Sole Structures and Articles of Footwear Having Separate and Separable Outsole and Midsole Components	NIKE, Inc.
<a href="#">18923118</a>	Electronically Controlled Bladder Assembly	NIKE, Inc.
<a href="#">18890177</a>	Spike Structure Made of Different Materials and Featuring Augmented Joining Strength	N/A
<a href="#">18672488</a>	Intelligent Digital Shoelace End Wrapping Machine	N/A
<a href="#">18137603</a>	Golf Shoe with Internal Structure	Acushnet Company
<a href="#">18218383</a>	Method of Manufacturing a Tunable Midsole for an Article of Footwear	PUMA SE
<a href="#">18128746</a>	Anti-Infective Shoe Soles	Karnali Innovations LLC
<a href="#">18784743</a>	Toe Walking Prevention Device	2 Steps Ahead LLC
<a href="#">18620338</a>	Sole and Shoe Including the Same	ASICS CORPORATION
<a href="#">18175643</a>	Fluid-Filled Chamber with a Tensile Element	NIKE, Inc.
<a href="#">18234439</a>	Orthopedic Insoles for Use in Open Footwear	N/A
<a href="#">19047591</a>	Footwear Strap and Footwear Having the Same	Skechers U.S.A., Inc. II
<a href="#">18540290</a>	Footwear Component Manufacturing System	NIKE, Inc.
<a href="#">18511424</a>	Soft Goods Formed From a Fiber Liquid Slurry Having Surface Features, and Methods for Making the Same	Simplifyer, Inc.
<a href="#">18651506</a>	Novel Weaving Shoe Uppers with Elastic Strings	Fujian Xiduo New Material Co., Ltd.

💡 **Go deeper:** View the most recent IP Digest: [April 2026 IP Digest](#).

- **Even deeper:** For past issues, you can view the IP Digest archive [here](#). (Note: You may need to create a password for the Intel Center to access the report.)

## FDRA’s website to fight counterfeits



Several years ago, FDRA built the website Fight Footwear Fakes to educate both the public and policymakers on footwear IP issues and help eradicate counterfeit footwear in the U.S.

- **Go deeper:** Check out the website here: [Fight Footwear Fakes](#).

*The FDRA IP Digest is a newsletter of recent footwear IP news and updates on footwear patents for utility, design, and trademarks. This report is for FDRA members only. Matters reported on or summarized herein may not be construed as legal advice on specific situations.*

Thanks for reading this month’s FDRA IP Digest. Feel free to share this newsletter with others on your team. Have a great rest of the week!

Thomas

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