



NEWS IN BRIEF

Senate Finance Committee Votes on McAleenan

The nomination for Acting Commissioner Kevin McAleenan for the position Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection was not voted on at the end of the Senate sessions in 2017. Under Senate rules for nominations not voted on by the end of the session must be returned to the President and a new vote is required. President Trump sent the nomination back to the Senate Finance Committee on January 8. The committee approved McAleenan's nomination by voice vote on January 17 and has moved it forward for the full Senate vote.

CBP Stops Shipments Suspected for N. Korean Labor

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has been stopping shipments in recent months over the possible use of North Korean labor. We have heard of 15 shipments being stopped as suspected of involving the use of North Korean labor somewhere in the manufacturing process. CBP Field Operations has directed the Centers of Excellence and Expertise to issue "Request for Information" forms (CF 28) to several importers about their review of the manufacturing process for North Korean labor and/or polices for forced labor. They have focused on importers with links to vendors, manufacturers and producers in areas of China that are suspected of employing North Korean nationals for their labor.

NAFTA Talks Continue

The sixth round of NAFTA talks will continue on January 23. Last week, both President Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan said that they would rather renegotiate than walk away from the Pact altogether. While he has threatened to pull out of NAFTA, President Trump has also said that there is no rush to reach a deal.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, and Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo are scheduled to attend the World Economic Forum in Switzerland that also begins on January 23, but all three are scheduled to be back in Montreal for the end of this round of negotiations.

MTB Passes the House

The Miscellaneous Trade Bill (MTB), H.R. 4318, was passed by the House on January 16. This bill has over 1,700 items that will receive duty-free treatment. Each item will fall under an HTS number, but **not everything** that is classified under that specific HTS number will qualify. The duty-free status for each item will be tied to the narrow description of the product as spelled out in the bill. The bill will now go to the Senate for their review.

The following link is to the House Ways and Means website's announcement of the passing of MTB. Here you will also find a link to the actual bill which totals 500 pages.
<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/?s=Miscellaneous+Trade>

By **Todd Boice**, President