

LARSON: SCIENCE COMMITTEE REJECTS KEY INITIATIVES; PASSES WEAK MANUFACTURING BILL GOP Majority Votes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 16, 2004

LARSON: SCIENCE COMMITTEE REJECTS KEY INITIATIVES; PASSES WEAK MANUFACTURING BILL
GOP Majority Votes Down Most Amendments - Including Larson Measures to Aid U.S. Manufacturers and Invest in Energy Technology

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) offered two amendments before the House Science Committee today to provide greater funding for energy technology development to assist manufacturers and to create an undersecretary position to coordinate assistance for struggling U.S. manufacturers. The committee's GOP majority voted to reject 10 of the 11 amendments, including Larson's, that were offered to strengthen the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act, H.R. 3598, which was before the committee for mark-up today.

"Millions of manufacturing jobs have been lost in recent years and the only solution put forward by the Republican Majority is this watered down, weak piece of legislation," said Larson. "My Republican colleagues rejected numerous amendments that would have strengthened the overall bill and provided a much-needed boost to struggling U.S. manufacturers and workers. It would have also helped grow our industries in the face of strong foreign competition and declining research and development funding. Many Republicans on the committee strongly supported some of these amendments, but voted against them to avoid angering the GOP Leadership and the White House. While the GOP legislation does include positive provisions, such as the authorization the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, it fails to include many of the recommendations made by witnesses during the hearing on this issue before the Environment, Technology, and Standards Subcommittee. This is another example of the Majority squandering an opportunity to address an issue that is on the nation's front burner and instead using the chance to add a political coat of paint to the problem."

The first measure offered by Larson would have reauthorized the "Industries of the Future" program within the Department of Energy, a successful initiative that works with energy consuming industries to create technology through research and development funding that reduces emissions and increases productivity. These industries include mining, petroleum, metal casting, wood products, glass, chemicals, aluminum and steel and together, they represent the majority of industrial energy consumption.

Larson's second amendment would have created an Undersecretary of Manufacturing within the Department of Commerce and refocused the Technology Administration on manufacturing by establishing a Manufacturing and Technology Administration. The Undersecretary would serve as a high-level point of contact for the manufacturing sector and would coordinate and integrate federal manufacturing-related activities. The Manufacturing Administration would conduct broad-based manufacturing and technology policy analysis; coordinate with states, local governments and universities on manufacturing and technology activities, including education and training.

###