

LARSON WILL OFFER AN AMENDMENT TO HELP STRUGGLING U.S. MANUFACTURERS

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WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) will offer an amendment before the full House on Friday that would revamp the current Technology Administration to focus on the needs of manufacturers and create a new Undersecretary position within the U.S. Department of Commerce. The position would coordinate assistance for struggling American manufacturers. Larson is offering the amendment to strengthen the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act, H.R. 3598.

"Millions of American jobs have been lost in recent years and action is urgently needed to boost U.S. manufacturers and create jobs," said Larson. "This amendment to strengthen the overall bill is backed by an array of manufacturing support organizations and workers, including the Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut and the machinists union. It is based on discussions I had in my district with industry and labor leaders all of whom expressed the same concerns. A vote for this amendment is a vote to increase and coordinate much-needed help to our manufacturers. It would help grow our manufacturing industries in the face of strong foreign competition and declining research and development funding. Creating jobs and making our industries stronger is a bipartisan goal and I hope my colleagues from both sides of the aisle support it."

While President Bush created an Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing and Services within the International Trade Administration, the ITA does not have the range of expertise to address the full range of manufacturing issues such as training, skills development, education, research and technology development and manufacturing infrastructure. Manufacturers would like an Undersecretary of Manufacturing that can speak on their behalf, serve as a high-level point of contact for sector and will coordinate federal manufacturing-related activities. The amendment is fiscally responsible because it takes the Technology Administration, which has accomplished little over the past few year and already has a budget request of \$8 million for next year, and focuses it on manufacturing and competitiveness. The National Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing (NACFAM) supports this approach.

The amendment would:

Ø Re-orient the current Technology Administration (TA), the Undersecretary of Technology, and the Office of Technology Policy (OTP) towards manufacturing and competitiveness issues.

Ø Re-focus TA by establishing a Manufacturing and Technology Administration.

Ø Create an Undersecretary of Manufacturing and Technology who will be supported by an Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing, an Assistant Secretary for Technology, and an Office of Manufacturing and Technology Policy.

The Undersecretary would be a senior point of contact for the manufacturing sector and would coordinate and integrate federal manufacturing-related support. The Manufacturing Administration would conduct broad-based manufacturing and technology policy analysis as well as coordinate with states, local governments and universities on manufacturing and technology activities, including education and training.

The amendment's language is taken from a larger manufacturing bill Larson originally introduced in April, the American Workers and Manufacturers Support Act, H.R. 4177. That legislation is an 8-point plan to boost and protect U.S.

manufacturers.

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