

## LARSON AMENDMENT SOUGHT TO RAISE FOCUS ON MANUFACTURING

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WASHINGTON, D.C. —Congressman John B. Larson Wednesday expressed disappointment that the House chose to stick with President Bush's underwhelming response to the loss of American manufacturing jobs instead of adopting his amendment that would have strengthened the manufacturer's voice within the Administration.

Larson's amendment to the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act of 2005 was narrowly defeated 210-213.

"Small manufacturers have spoken up and with great alarm they are asking where is the champion, where is the voice for us at the national level," Larson said. "We all know the stark statistics: 3 million Americans in manufacturing have lost their jobs – 110,000 in this year alone. In Connecticut, 57,000 jobs have disappeared since 2001. These numbers – behind which are real Americans with families to feed and the companies that employ them – demonstrate that the White House has relegated manufacturing to a back seat. We don't have time or jobs going to China, India and Pakistan to waste."

Larson sought to give manufacturing a stronger role in policy-making by appointing an Undersecretary of Manufacturing and Technology within the Commerce Department devoted to promoting manufacturing competitiveness and job growth. An undersecretary would be invested with the influence, expertise and authority lacking in the so-called "manufacturing czar" that President Bush created two years ago.

The "czar" is an Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing and Services located within the International Trade Administration of the Commerce Department.

"The czar is a paper title," Larson said. "He has no budget, no resources and comparatively little stature, all signaling the lesser priority that Bush Administration views the hemorrhaging of fair-paying manufacturing jobs. We need someone whose sole focus is manufacturing competitiveness and innovation."

The undersecretary would have overseen an assistant secretary for manufacturing and an assistant secretary for technology. Larson also proposed restructuring the Commerce Department's Technology Administration, which currently conducts manufacturing studies. Renamed the Manufacturing and Technology Administration, the agency would have reported to the Undersecretary of Manufacturing and Technology.

The seeds of Larson's amendment were planted at a district Chamber of Commerce meeting at which owners and representatives of manufacturing companies asked why the federal government did not pay more attention to the issues facing small manufacturing.

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