

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Where the Jobs Are: Can American Manufacturing Thrive Again?”
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
April 19, 2012

I want to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing. And I want to thank Secretary Bryson for taking time to be with us today. I am glad we are continuing our focus on how we can keep and create jobs here in America. I know that members on both sides of the aisle agree that America needs a strong manufacturing sector.

American families are facing real economic pain. For millions, their jobs are gone; their savings depleted; their home values down; and their belief in the promise of the American dream diminished.

So what should we do? The President has said we must out educate, out-innovate, and out-build our competitors. I believe we are up to the challenge.

Our workers must be at the forefront of creating the next generation of technologies, whether that it is in the energy sector, advanced automobiles, life-saving pharmaceuticals, or information innovations.

And we must both invent and build these products. A recent New York Times article, “How the U.S. Lost Out on iPhone Work,” details why successful manufacturing plants must be located near their supply chains. They don’t just need an endless supply of rubber gaskets or screws at their fingertips, but “an army of midlevel engineers” that are available for testing and changing the products in a timely and efficient way.

For the U.S. to continue to lead in innovation, we must maintain a strong manufacturing sector. Research and development must stay strong. Right now, about 67% of private sector R&D and 90% of all patents in this country are connected to manufacturing. As researchers at Harvard Business School explain, we cannot maintain a strong economy by doing high-tech research at home and allowing manufacturing to continue to move offshore. We need “two-way feedback.”

Our goal is good jobs across all segments of the economy, but manufacturing jobs in particular help ensure that we have a strong middle class. These jobs have good pay and tend to be stable. In addition, manufacturing brings with it strong spillover benefits for regional and local economies. Once there is a manufacturer in town, we see suppliers move in along with restaurants, retailers, and service providers.

Madam Chairman, I look forward to today's hearing and to us all working together to achieve the targeted, public, and private investments in key sectors so that manufacturing jobs and our entire economy continue to grow.