

**Testimony of
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before the

**House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives**

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Chair Schakowsky, Ranking Member Bilirakis,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee today in support of the manufacturing.gov act.

My name is Eric Hagopian, owner and CEO of Pilot Precision Products located in Western Massachusetts in South Deerfield near Amherst and about two hours from Boston. I formed today's version of Pilot Precision Products in 2016, but our roots trace back to 1945, when The duMONT Company was founded to manufacture broaching tools in the area which was also home to many other industrial cutting tool companies such as Greenfield Tap and Die, Bendix and many others.

We now have 35 employees as part of this small business, manufacturing and supplying precision broaching tools and other hole making tools for the aerospace, defense, automotive, and medical, industries to name a few. Broaching is a metal cutting operation that uses a multi-tooth tool called a broach to change a round hole into a shape such as a hex, spline or other shape used in mechanical drive components. Metals such as steel and aluminum are most prevalent.

I also serve on the Executive Committee of the National Tooling and Machining Association based in Cleveland, Ohio and am speaking today on their behalf and on behalf of the thousands of small and medium sized manufacturing shops across this country just like Pilot Precision Products.

As the past two years have shown, manufacturing in America is critical to our economic and national security. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, most U.S. manufacturing businesses were deemed "essential." We kept our doors open and the lights on, producing the products Americans need and keeping our communities safe.

No matter what, manufacturers are there for Americans.

Now, manufacturers need our government to be there for us. We work hard to compete on an uneven global playing field. We are often up against foreign government-subsidized companies and though the U.S. government has programs to help improve our competitiveness they are often difficult to find and to navigate.

I am fortunate in that I have an active trade association to support me but thousands of other manufacturing owners see the federal government as too big to help and too diffuse to be effective.

The truth is that manufacturing touches virtually every part of the federal government. From job training programs to advanced manufacturing initiatives, our sector can benefit from programs at the Departments of Commerce, Labor, Energy, Defense, Transportation.

The Government Accountability Office recently found that the fifty-eight federal programs across eleven federal agencies exist to support manufacturing. And this is the problem! These programs are scattered across the many different agencies and departments with which manufacturers interact. According to that same GAO report, eleven programs are at the Commerce Department alone, but can be found in all different parts of the Department.

That's why we need the manufacturing.gov Act.

The Commerce Department should be the go-to resource for all things related to industry. Right now, I have to know what a program is called and know where to look for it and then then try to track down a program contact. But what if I do not know that a program exists that could benefit my small business? How would I learn about it without the support of my industry association?

We need a one-stop shop where manufacturers can quickly go to learn about programs already funded and available.

By passing the manufacturing.gov Act and establishing a section on the manufacturing.gov website with information about federal manufacturing programs, our businesses can quickly identify how we can reinvest our tax dollars back into our local community and industry.

The bill places focus on providing more information on resources available in the all the areas top-of-mind to manufacturers like us. Having all links and information on programs available to our small business in one place would not only save time but allow us to identify and benefit from programs. The topics under the manufacturing.gov Act such as workforce training, supply chains, technology and research and development, and trade are all central to our business.

To be honest, when I first heard about the manufacturing.gov Act, I was somewhat surprised something like that did not already exist. A centralized hub to connect manufacturers with federal manufacturing programs seems like a commonsense approach that would help us benefit from programs already designed and funded to support manufacturing in America.

But knowing about the programs is only the first step. Small businesses often lack the resources and know-how to go about applying and then implementing the necessary step. This is where industry trade groups such as the National Tooling and Machining Association can partner with the federal government and other stakeholders to increase awareness of the programs and provide initial support.

Manufacturers are always there for this country, innovating, creating, powering our growing economy. But we are facing many challenges from worker shortages to supply chain disruptions. Passing the manufacturing.gov Act will ensure that our government can be there for us. With a one-stop hub for manufacturers, the U.S. government can help businesses like mine identify existing programs that could benefit our industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and on behalf of myself the NTMA, and our industry, I encourage you pass the manufacturing.gov Act.