OPENING STATEMENT
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House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Research & Technology

Examining Federal Advanced Manufacturing Programs

September 10, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding today's hearing to review current federal efforts in advanced manufacturing as well as to examine legislation I've introduced to help ensure our manufacturing sector remains competitive and continues to create jobs over the long-term.

Some of you may not know this, but my home of Dallas, Texas is the sixth largest metropolitan economy in the United States and according to the Brookings Institution, the 12th largest in the world. I mention this because one of Dallas's strengths is its manufacturing sector. About 250,000 people were employed in a manufacturing job in 2010 and one-third of those jobs were in a high technology area.

These figures show that the Dallas region has the potential to be a hub for advanced manufacturing for years to come, but this is by no means guaranteed.

While the United States is struggling to sustain its leadership, other countries are focusing their full attention on promoting manufacturing and innovation. They are aggressively investing in research and development and shaping their policies and programs to change the competitive landscape in their favor.

We simply cannot afford to stand idly by and watch our competitors position themselves to move ahead of us. We need our manufacturing sector to be the most sophisticated in the world, using the newest technologies and the most efficient methods and processes.

That is why I introduced the *Advancing Innovative Manufacturing* –or AIM Act– which can help ensure the survival of our manufacturing sector and our global leadership by making strategic investments in manufacturing research, development, and education.

First, the AIM Act brings the public and private sectors together to develop research roadmaps and share the cost of conducting the research contained in those roadmaps. It does this by formally authorizing NIST's Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia program at a level that will allow the program to fully accomplish its mission of addressing the precompetitive challenges American industry faces today.

Next, the AIM Act focuses on a key segment of our economy, the small and medium-sized manufacturer. These small businesses drive job growth, but they often lack the technical expertise and capacity needed to transform an innovative idea into a new product or service. My bill creates a pilot program that will provide small and medium-sized manufacturers with vouchers that will allow them to "buy" R&D or innovation expertise as needed.

Innovation vouchers programs have been deployed in more than a dozen countries with encouraging results. For example, a study found that eight out of ten vouchers issued by the Holland government resulted in an innovative product that would not have otherwise been realized.

Finally and maybe most importantly, the AIM Act addresses our workforce needs by providing community colleges with grants that will allow them to prepare our students for the manufacturing jobs of the future.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to end by quoting from a comprehensive National Academies report from last year that I think clearly summarizes where we stand. "The U.S., while retaining the vestiges of its leadership position, should recognize that merely maintaining the current policies and programs will lead to continued erosion of our economic capabilities, especially in the high technology industries that are the basis for future prosperity."

Mr. Chairman, we need to be bold and invest in our future. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on ways to improve the AIM Act and on what policies and programs should be implemented now to build a productive and job creating 21st century economy.