

Congressman David N. Cicilline (RI-01)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Testimony
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Throughout our history, the American manufacturing industry has been the backbone of the U.S. economy. While many manufacturing communities, such as those in my home state of Rhode Island, have faced challenges as the world globalizes and technology changes, the manufacturing industry today offers new opportunities as a robust, globally competitive, 21st century enterprise.

Rhode Island is the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Rhode Islanders are proud of our heritage of innovation and investment in the manufacturing sector, which has maintained a strong presence as a permanent part of our state's economic landscape.

In 2015, manufacturers employed over 41,900 workers in Rhode Island and exported \$1.57 billion in manufactured goods. Manufacturing has long been the driver of the Rhode Island economy, and strong investments combined with public/private collaboration will continue to bring economic development and good paying jobs. The federal government must continue to invest in the American manufacturing industry to ensure that it continues to grow and thrive in the modern economy.

Reports that President Trump plans to cut \$10.5 trillion over 10 years from the federal budget are extremely troubling and could have devastating effects on the American economy. We have seen the adverse effects of implementing deep cuts on federal agencies. For example,

the Government Accountability Office notes that during the implementation of the 2013 sequestration: “19 agencies reported curtailing hiring; 16 reported rescoping or delaying contracts or grants for core mission activities; 19 reported reducing employee training; 20 reported reducing employee travel; and 7 reported furloughing more than 770,000 employees from 1 to 7 days.”¹

Such an austerity measure will have broad implications for our nation’s manufacturers and would harm the successful Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) administered by the Department of Commerce as well as the Economic Development Administration (EDA) if their funding is reduced. Both the MEP and EDA have been essential in supporting businesses across the country that create good-paying middle class jobs and improve domestic manufacturing competitiveness. According to NIST, “MEP Centers interacted with 25,445 manufacturers, leading to \$9.3 billion in sales, \$1.4 billion in cost savings, \$3.5 billion in new client investments, and helped create and retain more than 86,602 jobs.”² Rhode Island’s MEP, Polaris, helped add 138 jobs in 2016 and increased or retained sales by \$27 million. Ongoing funding will continue to allow Polaris and other MEPs to continue their work to invest in our nation’s workforce and grow our economy.

I’d like to express my support for the Regional Innovation (RI) Program at the Economic Development Administration and request continued, robust funding in FY18. This unique program funds organizations that are growing jobs and local economies through science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It includes a 1:1 private match, which serves as a

¹ <http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/661445.pdf>

² <https://www.nist.gov/mep>

catalyst for startups and entrepreneurship companies, multiplying the impacts of the program award. To accomplish its objectives, the RI Program focuses on getting research off of laboratory shelves and into the market, where it contributes to the economy—and helps grow the manufacturing sector—through new businesses and new products.

The demand for this unique program is very strong. To date, organizations in all 50 states and Puerto Rico have applied for awards, and the EDA has received more than 620 applications from every state and Puerto Rico committing a total match of \$284.4 million. Projects receiving awards under the RI Program are flexible and tailored to local needs, ensuring its value in any community.

This is a valuable and flexible program with potential to positively impact every congressional district. I am proud to support the Regional Innovation Program and ask that the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies continue support this vital program in FY18.

Another critical component of our government's investment in manufacturing is the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) Program administered by the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) within the Department of Commerce. NNMI is a valuable entity that coordinates federal oversight and funding of regional Centers for Manufacturing Innovation as they continue their research, development, innovation, and commercialization of advanced manufacturing technologies. Robust funding for this program

will allow continued development of best practices to support public-private partnerships and to further expand the advanced manufacturing sector.

I thank my colleagues for their ongoing commitment to supporting manufacturing and look forward to working with them to ensure manufacturing maintains a strong presence as a permanent part of our nation's economic landscape.