

Many hands have been wrung over the outsourcing of manufacturing and service jobs to foreign workers, but on Wednesday House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md., 5th) stopped by an industrial park in White Plains to highlight a local manufacturing success story.

Work didn't stop at ADJ Sheet Metal, even for the highest ranking Maryland congressman, so Hoyer had to shout to be heard over the clanging of machines and metal as he toured the midsize factory, which primarily makes ductwork for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, according to President Greg Pickens.

After two flat years, ADJ is projected to grow by 8 percent this year, and 12 percent next year, Pickens said. He attributed the improvement to a change from doing private sector work to pursuing government contracts, "a shift in our strategy to enable us to grow." To accommodate the expansion, the company of 133 workers will be moving in coming months to a space, also in White Plains, that is twice as large, according to ADJ officials.

But Hoyer attributed ADJ's success to something else — overall economic improvement.

"People don't necessarily see it, but the stock market sees it ... because the economy is starting to come back. Not as fast as we'd like, but some companies like ADJ, they're seeing growth," Hoyer said.

The next step, according to Hoyer, is structuring trade so that American companies sell more products overseas while simultaneously reclaiming manufacturing jobs that have migrated to factories in China and elsewhere. This can be accomplished if the federal government, labor unions and American manufacturers work together, he said, which they should because their interests align.

"My thinking is, we have a joint interest with labor and business. Don't kid yourself that if manufacturing goes out of business, [that] organized labor, or any kind of labor, is going to have a job," Hoyer said. Later, he added that "obviously, we're getting killed on the balance of trade. What we want to do is facilitate, really, small companies. Big companies can take care of themselves. Companies like you, to facilitate your ability to bid jobs effectively overseas," he

said.

ADJ, which has been in White Plains for nine years, does virtually all its work in the United States, Pickens said.

But the company also buys only American materials, he said.

According to Hoyer, more dollars need to be spent in the United States. He cited the example of the Kindle, an e-book reader. Of the \$145 purchase price, only about \$25 to \$45 stays in this country, he claimed.

"All the rest is overseas. We invented the Kindle. We keep doing that ... invention and innovation, and then [the dollars are] going to go overseas," Hoyer said. He had particularly harsh words for the Chinese, saying they "steal us blind" by copying American ideas without paying for them.

Later, he touted legislation that has passed in the House, but not the Senate, that would pressure China to revalue its currency. With Chinese currency manipulation, pegging the price of its currency to the dollar, Chinese products sold here are artificially cheap while American products are artificially expensive there, he said.

Hoyer acknowledged that exporting jobs remains the trend, but hopes to reverse it with a "Make It In America" agenda, he said. In this vein Hoyer praised new laws aimed at fostering domestic manufacturing, including making it easier to secure patents and to import components for assembly here, part of an attempt to restore optimism about economic opportunity in the country, he said.

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