

Guest post by *Rep. Steny Hoyer, Minority Whip of the U.S. House of Representatives*

American manufacturing helped make this the most prosperous country on earth—and it helped build a strong middle class. As we continue to focus on job creation and economic growth, I believe a key part of that effort must be rebuilding our manufacturing strength. That's why House Democrats have created the [Make It In America](#) agenda: it's about creating the conditions for American businesses to innovate here, create jobs here, make products here, and sell them to the world—and about making sure we have a workforce qualified for well-paying jobs. I believe strongly that when we make more products in America, more families will be able to Make It In America, as well.

Even as much of our economy has struggled, the manufacturing sector has consistently added jobs—it's been a bright spot for our recovery. But the news isn't all good. Manufacturing employment is still near its lowest point since World War II. And more worryingly, the index of manufacturing activity—a measure of the sector's productivity and growth—fell sharply last month, to its lowest point since fall of 2009.

Whether or not you work in manufacturing, that ought to concern you for a number of reasons. Manufacturing stimulates more activity across our whole economy than any other sector—so a fall in manufacturing activity is felt across the economy, which is bad for all of us. It's also bad for the middle class because manufacturing jobs pay better-than-average wages, and it's bad for America's competitiveness because China has overtaken us as the world leader in the dollar value of manufacturing output. Last but not least, a decline in manufacturing is bad for American innovation. As assembly lines move overseas, innovation often follows to be closer to production. That's resulted in America losing the innovative lead in a number of technological fields, from precision optics to photovoltaic cells to computer chips—we can't afford to lose ground elsewhere.

So this spring, Democrats introduced a wide-ranging set of new Make It In America bills for the 112th Congress. One new bill would expand and make permanent the research and development tax credit to help spur the innovation that creates new industries and new jobs. Another bill, which I am proud to sponsor, builds job-training partnerships between advanced

manufacturers and community colleges, helping students find good jobs, and helping employers fill their most pressing needs. Also on the agenda is a more efficient corporate tax code: one with lower rates and fewer loopholes, which will increase productivity by encouraging businesses to make decisions based on economic common sense, not on tax write-offs.

This agenda builds on the six Make It In America bills signed into law last year, which promote innovation, strengthen our workforce, and help companies produce more at home. These bills invest in science, technology, engineering, and math education to prepare a highly-skilled workforce; streamline the patent process to help get products to market faster; support small businesses through tax cuts and loans; and more. It's important to note that many of these bills received bipartisan support—and that this agenda as a whole has won the backing of both business and labor leaders.

With millions of Americans still out of work, it is more vital than ever for Congress to put forward a strong, positive agenda to get our economy back on track. It's essential that manufacturing be a central part of that effort. I believe that we can work together to ensure that we Make It In America.