

The Hill

Dems Ramp Up Pressure on House Republicans to Boost Manufacturing

By Mike Lillis

Behind Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (Md.), the lawmakers have attached a handful of proposals — some old, some new — to their years-old "Make it in America" package, which is designed to create jobs and promote exports by strengthening trade enforcement, hiking infrastructure spending and eliminating tax benefits for companies that move jobs overseas.

Hoyer said the proposals would pass if GOP leaders brought them to the House floor, and he called on Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) to do so.

"'Make it in America' combines the best ideas from both parties and has strong support from both business and labor," Hoyer told reporters Wednesday in the Capitol.

"Speaker Boehner said that he would allow the majority to work its will in this House. ... We're calling on the House leadership to put them on the floor before the summer is over."

The Democrats are emphasizing several proposals they feel have the best chance of attracting Republican support.

One bill, sponsored by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), would hike research spending for "advanced manufacturing" technology. Another proposal, sponsored by Rep. Kathy Hochul (D-N.Y.), provides tax breaks to employers who take on student trainees. A third bill, championed by Reps. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) and Billy Long (R-Mo.), would go after illegal imports by bolstering trade-law enforcement. And a fourth, authored by Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.), would end tax deductions for companies that outsource while offering tax credits to those that bring jobs back home.

"Now is not the time to hunker down," Hoyer said. "Rather, it is the time to go on offense."

Republican leaders have so far resisted most of the Democrats' job-creation proposals, focusing their efforts instead on bills that cut spending, shrink government and roll back federal regulations they say are killing jobs. Wednesday's vote to repeal President Obama's healthcare law, they say, is part of that strategy.

"The American people are going to decide whether we are going to continue with the president's failed policies or we are going to return to a pro-growth atmosphere with pro-growth policies of less red tape and lower taxes," House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) said Tuesday.

Although Obama mentioned "Make it in America" in his State of the Union speech in January, he's largely dropped the phrase as he's more recently taken his jobs message around the country.

Hoyer on Wednesday conceded that the president and House Democrats often use slightly different slogans in pushing GOP leaders to consider jobs legislation, but he insisted the underlying messages are the same.

"They're both consistent with one another — they're both about creating jobs and growing the economy — so we're on the same page," Hoyer said. "The president talks about 'Made in America' and he talks about 'Manufacturing in America,'" Hoyer said.

Democratic leaders from both chambers — including Hoyer — are scheduled to meet with Obama at the White House Wednesday afternoon. Hoyer said the Democrats will concentrate on "jobs, the economy — growing the economy — and ... the necessity to focus on ensuring that, before the end of the year, we have a plan to place this country on a fiscally sustainable, credible path.

"That," Hoyer added, "will go a long way toward helping with job creation."