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House Passes Barrow Amendment to America COMPETES Act

Amendment will require that manufacturing education be included in strategic plan to increase manufacturing and development

Washington, D.C. – The House of Representatives today passed an amendment to the America COMPETES Act introduced by Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) that will increase education in the field of manufacturing.

“This is something we need to be competitive,” said Barrow. “If we’re going to be a country that makes things, rather than one that just consumes what other countries make, then we’re going to need to know as much as we can about advances in manufacturing technology. This program will educate students in manufacturing technology. That’s good for the students getting the training, it’s good for the manufacturers that hire them, and it’s good for our economy.”

The America COMPETES Act establishes a committee within the National Science and Technology Council to coordinate and plan federal activities in manufacturing research and development. That committee is charged with developing a strategic plan to guide federal manufacturing research and development activities. Congressman Barrow’s amendment would require that the committee include manufacturing education in that strategic plan.

In order to succeed in the global economy, manufacturers need employees who have received the latest training in manufacturing technology, and Barrow’s amendment will help meet that need.

Congressman Barrow delivered the following remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of his amendment:

Mister Speaker, I’ve recently spent a lot of time visiting businesses in my district, many of which are large manufacturers. I have been struck that, even as our economy becomes more sophisticated, we still rely a great deal on our manufacturing base.

That base is threatened by competition from abroad and by financial crisis at home. What has sustained us through the hard times like these has always been American innovation. The America COMPETES Act fosters that tradition and I'm proud to support it.

I'm pleased to offer an amendment that I think makes this good bill a little bit better. In the 12th District of Georgia, we make everything from lawnmower blades to jet airplanes. But the fundamentals of both industries are very similar. It all starts with education in science, math, and engineering.

My amendment simply requires that we include manufacturing education in our long-term strategic plan for manufacturing R&D. I think that makes good common sense, and good business sense, and I thank the Chairman for his support. Thank you, Mister Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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