

September 21, 2005

### Akin Votes to Strengthen Manufacturing

Washington- United States Representative Todd Akin, a member of the House Science Committee, today voted for H.R. 250, the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act, which is designed to strengthen small and mid-sized manufacturing firms and help them continue to grow and create jobs.

“Encouraging the growth of manufacturing in the high-tech era is essential to America’s economic future,” Akin said. “America’s small and medium-size manufacturing companies are tech-savvy and highly competitive, and this measure will help us retain our cutting-edge leadership in the global marketplace.”

A summary of the legislation is attached:

H.R. 250 would:

- Establish an Interagency Committee on Manufacturing Research and Development to coordinate Federal manufacturing research and development (R&D) efforts, and an Advisory Committee to guide those efforts. The Interagency Committee would prepare a strategic plan for manufacturing R&D, produce a coordinated interagency budget, and write an annual report on the Federal programs involved in manufacturing R&D. The President may designate existing bodies to carry out the responsibilities of these committees.
- Reauthorize the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program with a mechanism for review and re-competition of MEP Centers, and create an additional competitive grant program from which MEP Centers can obtain supplemental funding for manufacturing-related projects. H.R. 250 would also allow MEP to accept and distribute funds from other Federal agencies without requiring matching funds. MEP funding would be authorized at \$110 million in FY 2006, including funds for a competitive grant program within MEP. The MEP authorization would increase by \$5 million per year to \$120 million in FY 2008.
- Authorize funding for National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)’s main laboratory account, the Baldrige Quality Award program, and the Construction and Maintenance account. The STRS and Construction accounts would be authorized in FY 2006 at the President’s request of \$426 million and \$59.8 million respectively, increasing by 5 percent in FY 2007 and 2.1 percent in FY 2008. H.R. 250 would also establish a standards education grant program at NIST and authorize its funding beginning at \$773,000 in FY 2006.

- Establish a three-year cost-shared, collaborative manufacturing R&D pilot grant program at NIST, funded at \$10 million per year for FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.
  
- Establish a post-doctoral and senior research fellowship program in manufacturing sciences at NIST, funded beginning at \$1.5 million in FY 2006 and increasing to \$2 million in FY 2008.
  
- Authorize funding for the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program. This program provides funds to community and technical colleges for workforce education and training. H.R. 250 provides \$55 million in FY 2006, \$57.7 million in FY 2007, and \$60.6 million in FY 2008, with a \$5 million set-aside per year that may be used for education and preparation of manufacturing technicians for certification.