

**Written Testimony Provided by**  
**Ms. Kimberly Gibson, Industrial Base Integration Director, America Makes**  
**on House Bill 291**  
**House Government Oversight Committee**  
**Proponent Testimony | June 11, 2025**

Chair Hall, Vice-Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on House Bill 291, supporting the creation of the Ohio International Trade Commission.

My name is Kimberly Gibson, and I serve as the Industrial Base Integration Director at America Makes—the nation’s leading public-private partnership for additive manufacturing funded by the US Department of Defense, via Cooperative Agreement with the Air Force Research Lab in Dayton Ohio. Chartered by US Congress in 2012, The national network of Manufacturing Innovation Institutes was born from a vision seeded by two Ohio institutions – Batelle and EWI (formerly known as Edison Welding Institute) and legislation sponsored by Ohio’s Senate delegation at the time. America Makes is the flagship Institute for the Manufacturing USA Network and the intention of the network was to establish an industrial commons for the creation and dissemination of manufacturing knowledge, intellectual property and access to state of the art equipment to advance economic security and competitiveness for the US.

Based in Youngstown, Ohio, America Makes works to accelerate the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies and foster industrial resilience across the defense, aerospace, and other critical supply chain sectors. We believe that investments in our manufacturing sector are investments in the fabric of America. In August we celebrate our 13<sup>th</sup> year of existence.

Nearly half a billion dollars in federal funding has moved through the America Makes pipeline since its inception. Our project calls provide funding to advance manufacturing technology and workforce training priorities, develop new suppliers to the aerospace and defense sector and require engagement and cost share from multi-national corporations, as well as small and medium businesses from around the U.S. Currently our membership rests at 301, of those 60 are from Ohio. Our membership also includes companies with foreign ownership and currently 13 percent of our members meet this criteria. Why am I sharing this with you?

The Youngstown Ohio ecosystem is ready to scale and grow as the nation, and the world, are adopting Additive Manufacturing technology into additional industries.

In February of this year, Governor Dewine and Lt. Governor Tressel along with Ohio Development Director Mihalik, announced America Makes was awarded the fifth and final Innovation Hub designation from the State of Ohio—the Youngstown Innovation Hub for Aerospace and Defense. This recognition is not merely an award, but a powerful validation of the years of dedicated effort by America Makes and our partners, all deeply rooted in the Youngstown community. Rather than

signaling the conclusion of our work, this milestone marks the beginning of a new era of opportunity—not just for Northeast Ohio, but for the entire state. Since the announcement, we’ve seen a significant surge in interest from foreign-owned companies seeking to establish operations in the region. These organizations recognize the strategic potential of this hub. They see the value of investing here, and above all, they see the strength and promise of the industrial base we’ve been building. This real-world momentum underscores the urgent relevance of House Bill 291. By creating formal structures to promote international trade, investment, and collaboration, the bill reinforces and amplifies the very progress we’re already witnessing on the ground.

I am honored to submit this proponent testimony in support of House Bill 291.

House Bill 291 proposes the establishment of the Ohio International Trade Commission—a visionary step forward that will enhance Ohio’s strategic economic partnerships with key international allies, including Japan, Ireland, and Israel, as well as two additional nations. This commission aligns closely with our work at America Makes, where we focus on fostering innovation, building resilient supply chains, and enabling cross-sector collaboration that bridges industry, academia, and government.

With global competition and supply chain disruptions reshaping the industrial landscape, this bill presents an opportunity for Ohio to position itself as a hub of high-tech collaboration and economic diplomacy. The emphasis on multilateral trade, joint research agreements—particularly those focused on emerging technologies like cybersecurity—and the creation of international technology centers, directly complements our mission and strengthens our collective ability to innovate.

Furthermore, the commission's structure, which includes representation from both public and private sectors, ensures that Ohio’s voice in international trade and innovation reflects the needs and expertise of our communities. I am particularly encouraged by the focus on academic and business exchanges, as well as infrastructure investment—both of which are essential to sustaining an agile and globally competitive industrial base.

On behalf of America Makes and our national network of innovation partners, I strongly support House Bill 291 and urge its swift passage. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions.