



Majority Whip Nick Santucci
House Technology and Innovation Committee
Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 159
May 6, 2025

Chairman Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 159, which would create the Manufacturing Technologies Assistance Grant program.

Manufacturing is one of the most vital industries in my district, and in Ohio as a whole. In Trumbull County, nearly 17% of the civilian employed population aged 16 and older works in manufacturing, making it the second largest industry in the county.¹ Additionally, in recent years, there have been over 32,000 manufacturing jobs and nearly 800 manufacturing establishments in the Lake to River region, which includes Ashtabula, Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana Counties. Manufacturing has ranked as the largest of Ohio's 20 economic sectors, with \$56.8 billion in exported products to 212 countries and territories and an annual payroll of \$48 billion. Ohio has also ranked among the top three states in the nation for manufacturing employment.²

It is essential that we protect our legacy manufacturing companies to support the continued success of manufacturing in Ohio. Technology has become increasingly more important, and some smaller manufacturing companies may struggle to fund new or more advanced manufacturing technology that would allow them to continue to be competitive in the industry. This legislation would support these companies by creating the Manufacturing Technologies Assistance Grant program. Under this program, eligible small- and medium-sized manufacturing companies would be able to apply to the Director of Development for a grant of up to \$150,000. This money would be used to fund projects that would increase the productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness of a manufacturing operation through the adoption and integration of manufacturing technologies. Projects might include the purchase of machinery or equipment, or the implementation of training to improve operations.

These grants will provide essential support to manufacturers by enabling them to automate repetitive tasks and upskill employees so they can adapt to evolving demands and circumstances, including workforce shortages. This program would also catalyze economic growth and innovation by providing smaller companies with the means to facilitate upgrades, including robot integration and Enterprise Resource Planning system modernization, allowing them to expand operations and meet increased demand. Additionally, the grant program would incentivize the adoption of emerging technologies, including automation, robotics, 3D printing, and data

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Trumbull County, Ohio*, "Industry," https://data.census.gov/profile/Trumbull_Co...?g=050XX00US39155.

² The Ohio Manufacturers' Association, *2024 Ohio Manufacturing Counts*, <https://www.ohiomfg.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/OMA-Manufacturing-Counts-2024-Final-Version.pdf>.

analytics, giving Ohio's manufacturers the resources necessary to continue to grow and remain competitive with both domestic and foreign competitors in a rapidly evolving global market.

Chairman Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 159. We would be happy to answer any questions.