Tracking the ‘Manufacturing Jobs for America’ Campaign

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In late 2013, U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.) announced the creation [1] of the “Manufacturing Jobs for America” initiative, which aims to “train Washington’s focus on manufacturing jobs.” The initiative, with 22 backers in the Senate, all Democrats, wants to bring new legislation to Congress and the President that will help American manufacturers grow and hire new employees, while also assisting in training a workforce capable of working those jobs. The 40 bills already associated with the initiative focus on four “organizing principles”:

1. Strengthening America’s 21st century workforce
2. Opening markets abroad
3. Creating the conditions necessary for growth
4. Expanding access to capital

In a statement, Senator Coons said: “Washington needs to refocus on manufacturing jobs, which pay better and contribute more to our economy than new jobs in other sectors. This campaign is designed to help manufacturing-jobs legislation that can make a real difference in our communities earn the bipartisan support needed to become law. There are too many Americans still looking for work for Congress to continue to waste time lurching from crisis to crisis. Manufacturing can power our economic recovery, but Congress needs to do its part to see that potential realized.”

When it comes to Congressional initiatives, this one seems fairly strong. It has support from some of the biggest industry organizations, including the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Tool & Machining Association, the National Skills Council and the Association for Manufacturing Technology. Big industrial players are also showing their support — Dow, DuPont, Ford, General Electric and others are mentioned on the initiative's site. Even unions are onboard, with the AFL-CIO, United Autoworkers and United Steelworkers showing support.

With all these important organizations, companies and unions involved, this initiative should be able to implement its suggested chances fairly easily, one would assume. But amid a time marked by congressional derision, it seems difficult — if not impossible — to pull off all the legislative changes listed on the initiative's site.

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