Report: Restoring the Middle Class With Manufacturing Jobs

University of Virginia Miller Center

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire) — A University of Virginia Miller Center commission, chaired by former Governors Haley Barbour and Evan Bayh, today released a report offering innovative, non-partisan, and actionable ideas on creating manufacturing jobs, which have been an engine of well-paying, middle-class employment throughout U.S. history.

"Building a Nation of Makers" [1] proposes six ideas to accelerate the pace of innovation for America's small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMEs.) The report is the first in the Milstein Symposium, a series that is focusing on restoring the American Dream. Proposals include:

1. **Talent investment loans to expand human capital** – Government-backed talent investment loans will give SMEs the capital to hire the workers necessary to expand their businesses, as well as to up-skill these new and current employees.
2. **Upside-down degrees to connect classroom learning with on-the-job learning** – Upside-down programs allow students to transfer accredited technical training, work experience, military training, or community college coursework as credit toward a bachelor's degree.
3. **A skills census to build a more efficient skilled labor force** – A regular survey of employers to determine current and projected skills needs – commissioned by state governments, with data freely available to the public – will allow businesses, policymakers, and educators to tailor their programs in real-time in order to forestall projected imbalances between skills and employer needs.
4. **A national supply chain initiative to fully map America's manufacturing ecosystems** – This will allow businesses and policymakers to cost-effectively fill gaps in the existing infrastructure and keep up with rapid changes around emerging technologies.
5. **Up-skilling high school students with expanded technology and engineering certification programs** – All students should have the opportunity to acquire a certified technical skill before graduating high school.
6. **A "big trends-small firms" initiative to diffuse the latest technologies to manufacturing SMEs** – This initiative, implemented through the Commerce Department's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, will connect small and medium-sized manufacturers with the latest innovations.

"The main goal is producing quality employees for our workforce so SMEs can grow,

prosper and provide more jobs, higher pay, better benefits, local and regional economic growth and a bigger, more competitive American economy: That is the social benefit, first and foremost," said Barbour and Bayh.

Gov. Gerald L. Baliles, director and CEO of the Miller Center, said, "Over the next decade, advanced technologies, major shifts in global demand, and greater emphasis on customization will fundamentally redefine manufacturing and create significant growth potential for SMEs. But for American firms to thrive, we must out-innovate the global competition."

The second Milstein Symposium commission, chaired by AOL founder Steve Case and former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina, is examining job creation through entrepreneurship. A third, chaired by former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, will focus on employment created by infrastructure investment. The commissions are part of the Milstein Symposium: Ideas for a New American Century.

"Working with the Miller Center, we created the Milstein Symposium to develop practical, nonpartisan solutions to some of the most pressing economic issues facing our nation, and especially the middle class, in areas that include manufacturing, entrepreneurship, education, and infrastructure. Our topic areas are broad, but our vision for this ambitious undertaking is laser-like in its focus: to examine the steps our nation needs to take to ensure the continued vitality of the American Dream in the 21st century," said philanthropist and entrepreneurHoward P. Milstein.

Besides Barbour and Bayh, other members of the commission on manufacturing include:

- Rebecca O. Bagley, president and chief executive officer, NorTech, a technology-based economic development organization focusing on Northeast Ohio
- Aaron Bagshaw, president, WH Bagshaw Co., the oldest pin manufacturer in the United States
- Matthew Burnett, founder, Maker's Row, a company endeavoring to simplify the manufacturing process by connecting designers to domestic manufacturers
- W. Bernard Carlson, chair, U.Va. Department of Engineering and Society; professor of science, technology and history, and the commission's lead scholar
- Jennifer Clark, associate professor at the School of Public Policy and director of the Center for Urban Innovation in the Ivan Allen College, Georgia Institute of Technology
- John Engler, president, Business Roundtable; former governor of Michigan
- James Fallows, national correspondent, The Atlantic
- James Manyika, director, McKinsey Global Institute; senior partner, McKinsey & Company
- Kate Sofis, executive director, SFMade, a non-profit corporation working to

bolster San Francisco'seconomic base through local manufacturing
- Howard Wial, director, Center for Urban Economic Development, University of Illinois, Chicago

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[1] http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/milstein/MilsteinReport-Manufacturing.pdf