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US House of Representatives
House Small Business Committee
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Small Business Committee, thank you for the opportunity to join you today. My name is Terry Iverson - President of Iverson & Company. We sell machine tools, primarily computerized (CNC), in IL, WI and IN. My brother Erik runs our family's indicator manufacturing business.

I come to the committee today to speak about the skills gap issue in manufacturing. This country is facing a crisis at the moment. If we do not find the next generation of manufacturing engineers, programmers, & machinists, etc., then the manufacturing sector will diminish, because we do not have the human resources.



Recently, I have been pleased to hear that there is a buzz about the manufacturing in the media. The sector is finally starting to get the attention it deserves. I strongly believe that manufacturing has made this country great, supplying good paying incomes for millions of families & I believe can help future generations as well, but we must be mindful of the skills gap issue.

For my entire career I have called on thousands of manufacturers & subcontract machine shops. Both have different needs and requirements, but when I have called on them over the past 33 years, all have increasingly shared the same problem— they cannot find enough skilled personnel. I have been told time after time,

“Terry, I will buy a machine today from you if you will provide an operator with it!”



Baby boomers are getting closer and closer retirement with the average manufacturing employee is 56 years of age.¹ Young people are being discouraged by relatives, counselors, teachers, the media — to not pursue a career path in the manufacturing because of misperceptions that must change. The industry is no longer a dark, dirty, dingy and low paying profession. Advanced manufacturing in the U.S. is now heavily computerized and automated. In Europe, not only do they still have apprenticeships in manufacturing, but they also have a culture that holds these advanced manufacturing positions in high esteem. Neither is the case here in the U.S.

I have always felt the young people of our country are our future and we need to educate the next generation of the realities of the industry compared to the general public's perception.

Currently, too many (42%) 42% young people going to college don't find their way to getting their degree in 4 yrs About 53% of recent college graduates are either unemployed or underemployed. 17 million workers with college degrees are now working jobs that do not require one

¹ Bloomberg Business Week by Harold L. Sirkin, November 12, 2012 and January 14, 2013



With skyrocketing college tuitions and admission requirements, it's clear that manufacturing should be embraced by our students.

There is clearly demand in the U.S. for high-skilled manufacturing workers. Many are of the opinion that all manufacturing has gone overseas. While some of this notion is true, advanced manufacturing will and must stay in this country. Some of the low-skilled tasks have in fact gone over to the Far East, but the high-skilled positions and STEM related skills are still needed in this country.

There are as many as 600,000 jobs high-skilled manufacturing positions currently unfilled despite an unemployment at 7.6%.² Manufacturing needs the best & brightest and best math and science students that are great with their hands. They need to be seen as *manufacturing champions!*

After being involved in technical education with several community colleges, high schools and serving on some technical education boards around the country I came up with a vision and organization – **CHAMPIONNow!** This is an acronym for **Change How Advanced Manufacturing's Perceived In Our Nation**. The **Now!** is the call to action. You can see our film trailer at our website.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2013

Since founding **CHAMPIONNow!** in 2009, I have been in various special projects. Currently, I am involved in a project that will film inspirational stories of three successful young adults and their transition into manufacturing career paths, so that we can use their manufacturing careers as role models for others unaware of these successful opportunities.

Additionally, I've been involved in Project Lead the Way in my community. The program gives high school students a way to apply theoretical knowledge with hands on applications, strengthening their STEM skills. This was missing in my engineering education. I became disenchanted instead went into the working world. It was my family's devotion to the art and science of manufacturing that actually brought me into what has now turned out to be a lifelong PASSION.

CHAMPIONNow! is poised and ready to Champion manufacturing careers. We need to educate our country on how exciting, challenging, honorable and financially rewarding these careers can be! Everyone in our industry has to quit complaining and join together to take action.



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I encourage everyone here to do what you can to lead the charge on the skills gap and supporting U.S. manufacturing. We have so many needs in technical education, policies, and perception. We need everyone on both sides of the political spectrum to agree on this and play a part in the solution.

Thank you again for your time and giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. I hope I have been able to bring to light some things & a passion that can make a difference in what I consider a vital topic in the U.S. manufacturing industry.

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