

**Remarks Prepared for Jay Timmons  
President and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers  
State of Manufacturing Tour: Tampa, Fla.  
University of South Florida  
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Good evening. It's great to be here in the Sunshine State in January.

It is a privilege to speak to educators and others working so hard to develop the talent this country relies on...and especially to address the students in this room who will soon be leading the U.S. economy forward. It's good to see so many from the Muma College of Business and the College of Engineering.

I want to thank Dr. Stiling and the University of South Florida for hosting us.

And I also want to thank Tom Feeny of Associated Industries of Florida for his partnership and tireless work on our tour...as well as Chris Hart of CareerSource Florida and Doug Bailey of Anheuser-Busch for being part of this important conversation.

I'm here today to share with you the State of Manufacturing in the United States. Now, why manufacturing? It's simple really. It's because the strength of manufacturing in America is responsible for the success of America in the world.

That is an indisputable fact. When manufacturing succeeds, America succeeds.

That may sound counterintuitive to some, and it belies the picture some would like to paint: that manufacturing means things of the past—old, gritty factories, simple tools and rudimentary machines.

If that's the image the word "manufacturing" conjures in your mind, then come with me, ladies and gentlemen. It's time to introduce you to modern manufacturing.

Today's manufacturing is vastly different from yesterday's. The National Association of Manufacturers has more than 14,000 member companies—from world-recognized brands to family-owned small businesses, and we are the voice of more than 12 million working men and women, their families and the communities they build. Just a quick look at some of our members' work will show you: modern manufacturing touches every aspect of our lives.

Innovative manufacturing is everywhere, across America and here in Florida.

From Ryder System's strides in alternative fuel solutions and energy efficiency...

...to the sustainable infrastructure developed by CSX.

From Rayonier Advanced Materials' development of high-value ethers that enable the development of slow-release medications...

...to Amgen or Bayer's research and production of cancer-fighting and life-improving drugs.

We're talking about everything from the precision metal-formed parts produced by Hialeah Metal Spinning...

...to the vast, new world of the Internet of Things, where everyday objects are now digitally interconnected by the web.

First it was our phones. Then it was our thermostats, our watches, our cars. Soon it will be everything from our contact lenses to our entire homes...from smart wallboard, to autonomous automobiles, to transcontinental pipelines.

Companies like Jabil are making the "digital home" a reality. And thanks to companies like Honeywell, for example, you can control your home security and energy management with the touch of a button from around the world.

That's the Internet of Things...and that's modern manufacturing.

By the year 2020, 26 billion objects will be linked together by the Internet. Manufacturing is truly changing everything...and all these things are changing America and changing our lives.

That's why, today, manufacturing in the United States is leading an innovation revolution—a revolution that will win us jobs and restore our mantle of leadership around the world.

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Right now, more than 12 million people across the country work in manufacturing, and our sector contributes more than \$2 trillion to national GDP. If U.S. manufacturing were its own country, it would be the ninth-largest economy in the world.

Here in Florida, manufacturing adds about \$41 billion to the state economy.

And get this important data point: For every dollar invested in manufacturing, another \$1.40 is added to the economy. It's why manufacturing—more than any other industry—improves our way of life and builds communities.

So, you see, the state of manufacturing matters. It matters for the state of our union.

Every day across this country, manufacturers go to work, competing to win. New technologies, affordable energy and world-leading productivity have given the United States a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. But obstacles are still in the way to forging an economy that lives up to our people and to the potential we can unleash.

Unavoidable headwinds, like global economic weakness and worldwide instability, have roiled not just the job market but manufacturing as well.

While these challenges will be slow to change, our leaders right here in our own country have at this moment the power to fix other self-imposed barriers to opportunity and success.

They can fix policies in Washington that imperil our promise.

These barriers exist because Washington hasn't yet summoned the will to change them. And because "We The People," in some ways, haven't done enough to fight for manufacturing as essential to American Exceptionalism and our future.

Just as "American Idol" is entering its final season this year, it's also time to end selecting political candidates based on how they sound, rather than what they can actually do for manufacturing and our country.

Of course, if you listen to the candidates who are out campaigning today, they all embrace manufacturing and pledge their support—at least rhetorically.

And the same is true of many of our leaders in Congress and state capitals—and among the general public.

But words alone won't change the business climate or create more jobs. We need the right public policy agenda for that.

At the NAM, we want to make it easy. We're spelling out exactly the right policies manufacturers need to compete and win, for America to compete and win.

Today, we unveiled our 2016 Agenda for Economic Growth and American Exceptionalism, and we're touring the country telling our story.

"Competing to Win" is an agenda that is guided by four core values that also happen to be foundational principles of this country that we love.

The first of these is free enterprise: powerful market forces that drive innovation and growth better than any system ever conceived in the history of mankind.

The second is competitiveness: our ability to expand markets and succeed in the global economy.

The third is individual liberty: the creativity and entrepreneurship unleashed by protecting, defending and advancing the basic freedoms enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

And the fourth, equal opportunity: our shared belief that every one of us, if given the chance, has the potential to contribute to the success of our companies, our communities and our country.

Every policy proposal supports these principles, which are also the values that have made and that will keep America exceptional.

Our message is this: If a candidate really wants to be a manufacturing president, this is the agenda.

If Congress wants to energize the manufacturing economy, this is the checklist.

And, if you want to be a manufacturing voter, these are the issues that affect you, your family, the students at this institution and this country's future.

We zero in on 11 areas: tax; trade; energy; environment; transportation and infrastructure; labor; immigration; workforce; health care; research, innovation and technology; and regulatory and legal reform.

That's more topics than we have time for this evening...so I'd like to focus on a subject close to the hearts of the people in this room—workforce development...connecting people with rewarding careers.

Over the next decade, the United States will need to fill 3.4 million manufacturing jobs. But 2 million of those jobs are likely to remain empty because there's a shortage of trained workers.

It's what we call the "skills gap," and it affects all of us...through lost innovation, lower productivity and suppressed economic activity.

The problem is especially disheartening given how hard it's been lately for people to find jobs. Manufacturers want to hire, but many workers lack the skills—often the high-tech skills—we need.

This is a lost opportunity. The average manufacturing worker earns over \$79,000 annually...\$15,000 more than the national average.

These are wages that can provide a good life for a family while saving for education and retirement.

Why, then, are only 37 percent of parents encouraging their kids to pursue manufacturing careers? And why do only 18 percent of people view manufacturing as a top career choice?

It's because many don't understand the modern industry. Too many picture gritty factory floors of a century ago. We need to replace those images with what manufacturing is today.

We need to present students like you with exciting propositions: Want to feed the world? Manufacturing is transforming agricultural technologies to provide plentiful, nutritious food for a growing population.

Want clean energy and a more sustainable economy? These objectives will require manufacturing innovation.

Want to save lives and treat debilitating diseases? Manufacturing includes pharmaceuticals.

Want to build the next revolutionary smart device? It takes manufacturers to make it possible.

More students—and their families, teachers and mentors—need to realize the opportunities that exist in today's manufacturing.

We are working together to get this message out. It's part of the reason I'm here today.

But we also need to address the training programs that prepare students to assume these challenging roles in manufacturing.

The vast majority of manufacturing executives say they struggle to find job candidates with computer and math skills, problem-solving abilities and technical training.

I want to recognize your governor, Rick Scott, for his efforts to address this need...and for declaring 2016 the “year of the manufacturer in Florida.”

We all need to find ways to help students develop these highly marketable skills...and empower them to explore rewarding careers.

This isn't something educational institutions like this one should be left to do alone. Manufacturing companies, schools, parents and communities must all partner together in building a 21st-century workforce.

Manufacturers are here to help. We're eager to collaborate on internship and apprenticeship programs...to partner with you to align curriculum with work-based opportunities.

And we're listening to all ideas about how we can surround students and recent graduates with the support and learning opportunities they need.

Working in tandem, rather than in our own silos, will require communication, experimentation and commitment.

But if we do, we can start closing the skills gap. We can fuel innovation.

And most importantly, we can enable a new generation—the students in this room—to achieve great things for themselves, their families, their communities and this country.

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That's what all of this is about—empowering us to pioneer the future.

Whether it's the workforce or the other issues we focus on in our agenda for manufacturing, what happens in Washington and in the voting booth is, in many ways, as important as the manufacturing process itself.

We need everyone in this room to make manufacturing a priority, because it's about helping real people build better lives.

To offer the mom living in Clearwater a job to provide for her children today and her retirement tomorrow...

To give the family in Cape Coral the chance to advance and raise their standard of living...

To ensure the veteran coming home to St. Petersburg can enjoy the freedom she defended for all of us overseas...

And to give communities across this state and this country a foundation for growth and hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Throughout America's history, manufacturers have made our country stronger by the people we employ, the lives we touch and the products we make. Today, building a stronger country requires something else—bringing the right leaders together to get the job done.

We need to elect and support people who believe in solutions—and those four foundational principles I outlined earlier: free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty and equal opportunity.

You know, leading our great nation is about more than who can yell the loudest, or who can denigrate others most, or who can express the least desire to work across ideological lines.

No, true leadership that is worthy of the promise of America brings out the best in all of us. A great leader appeals to our aspirations as a people.

A great leader unites. He or she doesn't divide.

So we're raising our collective voices—the more than 12 million voices in the Manufacturing Army—to speak out...and take a stand. We need you to join us.

We're manufacturers. We make things—incredible, life-changing things. And now, it's up to us to make a difference again—for the future of our country.

Thank you so much.