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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 22, 2009

Vice President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Biden,

I want to thank you for taking the Middle Class Task Force to Ohio this week. I can think of no better place than Ohio to highlight the challenges and opportunities facing middle class families. I understand you will be talking about how essential manufacturing is to our nation's strength. For many Americans, manufacturing has been a ticket to the middle class, and a strong middle class makes a strong nation.

As you know, reforming our nation's health care system is one of the most important steps Congress and the Obama Administration can take to create the business climate for our manufacturers to thrive and to help the middle class. With the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee considering health care reform legislation this week, I am unable to join you in Perrysburg tomorrow.

However, you and I have had several conversations about how important manufacturing is to our nation. Not only does manufacturing account for 10 percent of our entire economy and nearly three-fourths of our nation's industrial research and development, but manufacturing jobs pay 20 percent more, on average, than service jobs. One manufacturing job supports four other jobs throughout the economy.

But our manufacturers are in crisis. Manufacturers continue to lose jobs at a rapid pace. The auto industry's difficulties have compounded the devastating effects of the economic downturn on manufacturing employment. Small and medium-sized manufacturers, especially those in the auto supply chain, are struggling to obtain loans from banks that are often unwilling to lend, despite the expansion of Small Business Administration (SBA) programs.

The continuing erosion of our manufacturing sector makes our nation more dependent on foreign factories to produce not just our everyday consumer goods, but the components and equipment needed to produce clean energy and critical military hardware.

That is why I applaud the Obama Administration for recognizing that a strong manufacturing base is essential to our economic recovery. As we invest in clean energy and our

national defense, we must also invest in making new products and technologies in the United States. We must give our workforce and manufacturers the tools they need to compete and succeed globally. These tools include:

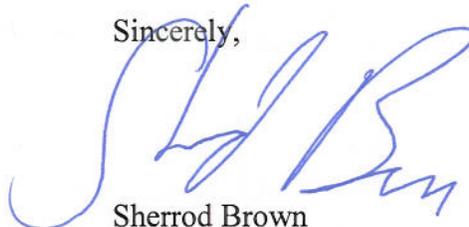
- Creating a business climate, through tax and health care policies, favorable to investment in manufacturing
- Investing in the manufacturing capacity for national priorities such as clean energy and critical military equipment
- Strengthening our component supply chains through the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
- Matching dislocated workers with emerging industries through sector-based workforce training strategies
- Making the research and development tax credit permanent to lend predictability to this crucial incentive for manufacturing innovation.
- Promoting exports and defending against unfair trade

In addition to these initiatives, it is in our country's best interests to respond quickly and effectively when an economic disaster strikes a community. When there is a natural disaster, the federal government has a strategy and resources to rapidly assist communities in need. Yet when there is a massive disruption in the economy due to private restructurings and layoffs, there is no similar national strategy to assist workers, businesses, and communities.

The President's Director of Recovery for Auto Communities is a welcome resource to dozens of Ohio communities. I fully support this initiative and urge the Administration to consider applying the strategy to communities confronting sudden and severe economic hardship stress, regardless of the cause.

Ohio and the middle class need a robust plan for manufacturing and economic recovery that will promote a high wage, productive, and sustainable economy. I thank you again for your support of Ohio.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator