

Opening Statement of the Honorable Lee Terry
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
Hearing on “Our Nation of Builders: Home Economics”
June 4, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning, and welcome to our hearing today on the national impact of the homebuilding industry. I am pleased to say that this is our fourth hearing in our “Nation of Builders” series and one that I have been looking forward to—particularly because I get to welcome George Kubat, the CEO of Phillips Manufacturing, a company I am proud to have headquartered in my district.

Thus far this Congress, we have heard from the CEOs of the largest steel companies in the U.S. and representatives of the world’s largest auto manufacturing companies, and even had a showcase displaying the wide range of products being manufactured in each district represented on this subcommittee panel. And today we are welcoming homebuilders and manufacturers of products that are included in homebuilding.

Of course, these industries are pretty different. A company like Ford, who testified at our hearing on auto manufacturing, is markedly different in many ways from my constituent on today’s panel, Phillips manufacturing. One makes cars, and one makes corner bead used for drywall finishing. Clearly, their products are different. Their companies are different sizes and serve different market sectors.

Yet their message to our subcommittee is quite similar. Both the President for the Americas at Ford and Mr. Kubat from Phillips put three of the same issues within their “top four” areas for Congress to focus on. Now, I don’t think these two business leaders know each other, so I doubt they worked in concert, but they were remarkably consistent when it came to identifying places where Congress should focus and policy areas in need of improvement. They say we should pay attention to regulatory efficiency and certainty; tax reform; and worker education and training.

Not surprisingly, the similarity between testimonies does not stop here. We have had over 35 witnesses testify at our manufacturing hearings and many of the themes and issues have been recurrent.

It’s time we start listening to what these folks are telling us, and start looking at ways we can take their advice, address their concerns and help them help Americans get back to work.

I believe that the best way to grow our economy is by nurturing an environment where organic job growth is possible. We have repeatedly heard about the good jobs manufacturing provides. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. manufacturing jobs pay around \$77,000 jobs a year. Let’s find ways to facilitate growth in these domestic industries.

I hope we will hear today from the homebuilding industry how we can help create the organic environment they need to keep building and creating good paying jobs while building affordable housing for Americans. This is a nonpartisan issue. Not only will creating this environment foster job creation, but it will also help manufacturers to build the next generation of more energy efficient, more affordable and safer homes.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for appearing today and everyone for attending.

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