

I congratulate Ford on this development and applaud its continued excellence in manufacturing in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Indiana.

#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR MCCONNELL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate my friend from Kentucky on Ford's expansion there. We have a proud auto building history in Indiana as well. We are extraordinarily proud of all the different folks who help make our country run, who help make our cars go, and in Indiana it is part of who we are. It is great to see expansion in Kentucky as well.

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS FOR AMERICA

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I am here today to discuss the most important issue facing Hoosiers—and all Americans—and that is getting a good job.

Good jobs allow us to provide for our loved ones, educate our children, and ultimately retire with dignity. Good jobs are also critical for strong communities and a vibrant economy. That is why I am proud to be part of the group of Senators working on Manufacturing Jobs for America. It is an effort to refocus the Senate on helping businesses create jobs and helping communities pursue economic development in the area of manufacturing.

This effort is aimed at building bipartisan support for modernizing the manufacturing sector, increasing access to capital, strengthening our workforce, and creating the conditions necessary for American manufacturers to grow and create jobs.

I have two bills as a part of this effort, the Skills Gap Strategy Act and the AMERICA Works Act. Both of them are focused on closing the skills gap. There are an estimated 600,000 manufacturing jobs that are unfilled across our country in part because employers cannot find workers with the skills they need to fill these open jobs.

We need to match up unemployed or underemployed Americans with the

training and education programs employers need so we can get more Americans into these good-paying, skilled jobs.

Last month my friend, Senator DEAN HELLER, and I introduced the Skills Gap Strategy Act. This directs the Department of Labor to develop a goal-oriented strategy to address our skills gap challenges. In order for every Hoosier who wants a job to have a job, and for Indiana's economy to continue to grow, we must train Hoosiers for the jobs that are available right now.

Our bill examines how we can better use existing resources to prioritize training and education programs and prepare our workforce to hit the ground running on day one.

The Skills Gap Strategy Act requires the Department of Labor to provide recommendations on: increasing on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, helping employers participate more in education and workforce training, and identifying and prioritizing in-demand credentials in existing and emerging industries.

When completing this report, we call on the Department to consider: specific labor barriers contributing to the skills gap; policies that have proven successful in key industries, regions, and countries where employers play a larger role in education and workforce training; and ways to better utilize Registered Apprenticeship and other workforce development programs.

We are also asking the Department of Labor to develop plans with the Departments of Commerce and Education to align education with industry and enhance employer participation in K through 12 and career and technical education programs, to increase preapprenticeship and college credit courses in secondary schools, and to improve school-to-work transitions and connections.

I am a strong believer in being fiscally responsible with Hoosier taxpayer dollars. That is why our bill asks the Department of Labor to focus on these solutions that use existing resources, existing programs, and existing personnel—not new programs or new spending.

Closing the skills gap requires participation from individual workers, the education community, and employers. But we have the ability to help, and a specific plan should be in place to do just that.

Also a part of the Manufacturing Jobs for America effort is another bill I am proud to support that focuses on closing the skills gap. Introduced by Senators HAGAN, HELLER, and myself, the AMERICA Works Act modifies existing Federal training programs so that they place a priority on programs and certifications that are recognized and demanded by industry.

I have heard time after time from Hoosier business owners and educators and workers about the pressing need to close the skills gap and to get more people to work.

To address this issue while not increasing Federal spending, the AMERICA Works Act modifies the Workforce Investment Act, Perkins Career and Technical Education, and Trade Adjustment Assistance to prioritize the credentials that employers need now.

The improvements made in this bill benefit both workers and employers, as workers would know that the time they spend training is more likely to lead to employment in a good-paying job, and employers would know that it is more likely that the people they hire would have the training they need to get the job done on day one.

The Department of Labor estimates there are nearly 4 million job openings in the United States, despite an unemployment rate that is still over 7 percent and despite millions of Americans looking for work. Now is the time to get to work on these jobs and match these people up with the job opportunities that are available out there. That is the most important thing we can be doing.

When Americans are working, we are a stronger nation. The Manufacturing Jobs for America effort to pass bipartisan legislation that everyone can buy into that helps manufacturers and workers is one important way we can move the ball ahead.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

#### DRUG QUALITY AND SECURITY ACT

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I wish to begin by thanking Chairman HARKIN, Ranking Member ALEXANDER, Senators FRANKEN and ROBERTS, and all of their staffs for their tremendous leadership on this bill. This bill was also developed in concert with our counterparts in the House of Representatives. I extend my thanks to ranking member HENRY WAXMAN and chairman FRED UPTON and their staffs of the Energy and Commerce Committee. What we have now is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that addresses two very serious issues: the safety of compounded drugs and the security of our entire drug supply.

Last fall an outbreak of fungal meningitis stunned the Nation and thus far has claimed the lives of 64 people and has sickened 751 in 20 States. This issue hits home for me because it started in