

Our Successes: One Voice Leading the Way

One Voice Files Comments on Workforce Innovation Law

One Voice filed comments to the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the government's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). One Voice strongly endorsed WIOA, which updates the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, and whose passage last year was a major victory for One Voice and all manufacturers. The law reforms WIA by eliminating 15 outdated programs, encourages the use of industry recognized skills certifications, and provides a greater role for businesses in implementing workforce programs locally. In the comments, One Voice asked for flexibility, whether in the structure and composition of the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) or the design of training and apprenticeship programs. The Department is interpreting the law in ways that could dilute the role of small businesses, increase union influence, and exclude businesses using non-registered apprenticeship programs. In a 2015 survey of One Voice companies, 90 percent reported having skilled job openings.

House Passes One Voice-Endorsed Medical Device Tax Repeal

One Voice succeeded in helping the House pass legislation to repeal the costly medical device tax. The legislation repeals the \$29.1 billion excise tax on medical devices established in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The bill would also allow device companies to seek refunds for taxes already paid under the law, since its implementation in January 2013. One Voice has long supported the repeal of this burdensome and costly tax on America's medical device manufacturers.

House Passes Bill Making R&D Tax Credit Permanent

House of Representatives passed the American Research and Competitiveness Act of 2015 to strengthen and make permanent the R&D Tax Credit. The bipartisan bill, introduced by Representatives Kevin Brady (R-TX) and John Larson (D-CT), would permanently extend the credit while allowing small businesses to claim the R&D against tax and AMT liability. It will also increase the Alternative Simplified Credit to 20 percent. On January 1, 2015, Congress allowed the R&D Credit to expire for the sixteenth time and making it permanent will provide stability for millions of manufacturers.

One Voice Member Testifies on Tax Reform

A One Voice member testified before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee on April 15 about the impact of tax reform on manufacturers. In official testimony, the manufacturer told Senators and Representatives that we need comprehensive tax reform for all businesses. Some in Washington are calling for C-Corporation only tax reform, which leaves behind the 81 percent of all manufacturers who are pass-throughs, paying taxes at the individual tax rates. The testimony highlighted the impact of the current tax code on restricting investment due to the uncertainty surrounding expired tax provisions such as the R&D Tax Credit, Section 179 Equipment Expensing, and Bonus Depreciation.

National Manufacturing Strategy, Innovation Bill Becomes Law

As part of a \$1.1 trillion FY 2015 spending package, Congress passed two critical provisions long supported by One Voice members to create a manufacturing strategy and promote innovation. Negotiators included the Revitalizing American Manufacturing and Innovation (RAMI) Act in the massive spending measure, which requires the federal government to develop a National Strategic Plan for Advanced Manufacturing. The U.S. is one of the few industrialized nations without a comprehensive manufacturing strategy. RAMI also allows for the creation of regional manufacturing innovation centers throughout the country, which will develop partnerships among businesses, researchers, and educators to explore the latest technologies in manufacturing.

EPA Agrees to Review Small Business Concerns; Two Month Delay for Power Plant Rule

Following tremendous pressure from outside groups, the EPA agreed to conduct a small business review panel ahead of releasing a massive new regulation to reduce carbon emissions from existing power plants. The Agency had long contended its rule would have little impact on small businesses, despite their own admission it would increase the cost of electricity by 6-12 percent annually. The EPA had targeted June for a release but objections from the small business community, including One Voice, led to the creation of a small business review panel, in part delaying the rule. While industry studies show the power plant rule could raise prices by 20 percent, even taking the EPA's 12 percent figure is a major increase for metalworking manufacturers who are large energy consumers. One Voice is working with lawmakers on possible legislative solutions to complement legal efforts ahead of the rule's August release.

Under Pressure, OSHA Delays Major Workplace Rule

Under pressure from One Voice and other industry partners, OSHA quietly announced it is delaying a proposed rule requiring employers to implement an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (I2P2), also known in some states as Accident Prevention Programs, Comprehensive Safety and Health Programs, or Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. The proposal requires employers to maintain written programs involving "planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving processes and activities that protect employee safety and health." The proposal also seeks to hold employers responsible for identifying and correcting hazards in their own workplaces. Currently, 34 U.S. states have established laws or regulations designed to require or encourage an I2P2, including 15 states with mandatory regulations for all or some employers.

Department of Labor Delays Persuader Rule

Following repeated delays since 2011, the Department of Labor announced in May that it was yet again putting off the "Persuader Rule," this time until December 2015. The new regulation requires that employers and their advisors file certain reports with the Department if they use outside labor consultants to interact with their employees during a union organizing activity or collective bargaining dispute. The rule is a top priority for unions, especially as their numbers dwindle and the stakes increase during organizing activity with the implementation of the Ambush Election rule on April 14, 2015.

Industry, One Voice Opposing OSHA Electronic Recordkeeping Rule

One Voice filed comments opposing an OSHA proposal to move forward with the electronic recordkeeping requirements rule. The Administration is trying to require businesses with 20 or more employees to file incident/accident reports electronically on an annual basis (those with more than 250 employees file quarterly) which they will make public. In August 2014, OSHA issued a supplemental notice to amend the original rule to require that employers inform their employees of their right to report injuries and adding whistleblower protections for employees. PMA and NTMA joined coalition partners and filed comments with OSHA opposing the rule, which they are set to finalize in September 2015.

Coalition, One Voice Defeat NLRB Poster Rule

In a significant victory for employers' rights, courts held that the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) Poster Rule is unconstitutional because it compels employers to post a notice with which they may not agree. The NLRB attempted to require all employers to post a notice in their facilities informing employees of their rights to join or form a union. One Voice, through its membership in the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, challenged the NLRB and secured an important win for manufacturers.

Chemicals Use Reform Bill on Verge of Becoming Law

For the first time since 1976, Congress is on the verge of passing a major overhaul of the law allowing the EPA to review and regulate chemicals imported, manufactured, disposed of, or used in the U.S. Under the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA), EPA requires the reporting, recordkeeping, and testing of chemical substances and/or mixtures (except food, drug, cosmetics, and pesticides). The TSCA inventory contains over 83,000 chemicals, and companies are required to notify the EPA when "pre-manufacturing" a new chemical. Regulators have not updated much of the TSCA list since its creation in 1977, leading many states to create their own chemical regulatory structure, causing significant disruptions throughout the manufacturing supply chain. One Voice has worked for several years with other manufacturers to develop a nation-wide uniform policy.