

ADVOCACY

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THE STAKES IN ALBANY

Why a Unified Voice Matters

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Decisions are made in Albany that directly impact businesses across New York State every year. The issues of the day move through the political process where individuals, companies, trade associations, labor organizations, and advocates converge on the Capitol to lobby elected officials. It is an imperfect but essential process, one that has real and lasting consequences for New York's residents, businesses, and communities. For manufacturers in particular, the stakes could not be higher.

Policy choices, from tax rates and economic incentives, to energy, workforce, and labor initiatives, impact whether companies choose to expand here, invest in new equipment, adopt advanced manufacturing technologies, or, in some cases, consider locating production elsewhere.

A COLLECTIVE VOICE IN THE CAPITOL

Having worked directly with the Council of Industry on manufacturing related issues, as a partner of the Manufacturers Alliance of New York State, it's clear that the association, and the Alliance, provide tremendous value and critical resources for its member firms.

The Alliance ensures manufacturers are not navigating Albany alone. Through assessing and monitoring legislation for potential impacts on manufacturers, members benefit from early warnings and thoughtful analysis that help them understand what is at stake. Additionally, the Alliance routinely engages with elected officials, legislative staff, and executive agencies to streamline and amplify the voice of manufacturers.

Policymakers are often asked to vote on complex issues that span energy markets, global supply chains, workforce shortages, and economic development strategy. The Alliance plays a critical role in translating how these policies affect manufacturers on the ground, from the shop floor to the balance sheet.

WHEN MANUFACTURERS SPEAK, POLICYMAKERS LISTEN

That work, however, is most effective when manufacturers themselves become involved and communicate in real time the challenges and opportunities they are seeing.

Data and policy briefs matter, but firsthand stories from employers are often what resonate most strongly with policymakers. When manufacturers speak directly about what works, what does not, and what is needed to remain competitive, it brings policy debates into real-world focus.

COMPETING FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INVESTMENT

The Manufacturing Alliance of New York enables manufacturing associations, like the Council of Industry to leverage their collective voices and present clear, unified messaging on the policies and laws moving through the halls of the Capitol. This unity is particularly important in an era when New York is competing aggressively with other states and countries for large-scale industrial and technology investment.

Semiconductor manufacturing is a prime example. Facilities require billions in capital investment, affordable and reliable energy, and a highly skilled workforce, along with a stable, predictable regulatory environment. Advocacy in Albany helps ensure state policies support semiconductor manufacturers and suppliers, while also strengthening New York's competitiveness for manufacturing investment.

This engagement matters not only during periods of growth and investment, but also during times of extraordinary uncertainty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the Alliance's communication channels proved especially critical. The Alliance worked closely with state officials to ensure manufacturing facilities could safely remain open by helping develop and implement clear health and safety protocols.

The Council of Industry also provides opportunities for manufacturers to engage directly in government advocacy locally and in Albany.

Each year, in partnership with the Manufacturers Alliance of New York, companies from the Mid-Hudson Valley and across the state head to Albany to meet with elected officials and to advocate on issues that directly impact manufacturers.

These meetings demystify the legislative process and reinforce the reality that lawmakers value hearing directly from employers who create jobs in their districts.

"Lawmakers value hearing directly from employers who create jobs in their districts."

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Because of these efforts, the Alliance has consistently secured funding for critical workforce development initiatives, including registered apprenticeships and training programs for advanced manufacturers.

These programs are especially important as manufacturers adopt new technologies and require highly specialized skills. State support for on-site training, upskilling, and partnerships with community colleges and technical schools starts with advocacy in Albany.

ENERGY POLICY & RELIABILITY

The Alliance has also been a leading voice in calling for an all-of-the-above energy strategy.

Manufacturers require energy that is not only clean, but affordable and reliable. Advanced manufacturing facilities, including semiconductor fabs, cannot tolerate frequent outages or volatile energy costs.

TAX POLICY AND PREDICTABILITY

Tax policy is another area where engagement matters. Strong tax policy means predictability, competitiveness, and return on investment.

Manufacturers make long-term decisions based on stable tax structures and incentives that encourage reinvestment, job creation, and expansion. Advocacy helps ensure lawmakers understand how decisions influence whether capital investment happens in New York.

Engagement through the Alliance, the Council, and individually, is how manufacturers help shape policies that support innovation, job creation, and long-term economic strength across New York State.

AFFORDABILITY AND HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Affordability is another area where engagement matters — particularly for manufacturers who are balancing the rising costs of healthcare while continuing to invest in their employees. One example is health insurance experience rating and supporting legislation that would reduce the eligibility threshold from 100 employees to 50 employees, aligning New York with federal standards.

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Experience rating rewards employers who invest in safety, wellness, and proactive health management by allowing premiums to reflect actual claims history. Expanding access to experience-rated plans can provide more mid-sized manufacturers with predictability and incentives to manage risk effectively.

Advocacy helps ensure lawmakers understand that affordability policies can directly influence hiring, wage growth, and whether investment happens in New York or elsewhere — and could improve competitiveness, particularly as many neighboring and competitor states offer more flexible, cost-effective insurance markets.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE THEY'RE NEEDED

Regardless of the issue, most people feel frustrated by the political process. The good news is that there are many ways to participate and help influence governmental decisions.

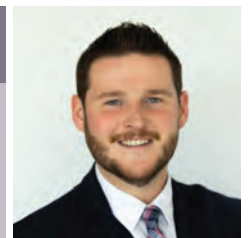
While voting on legislation is a visible part of a legislator's job, much of their work is dedicated to constituent services, helping residents and businesses navigate government programs, agencies, and challenges. Sometimes the most effective step is also the simplest, such as visiting your local State Senator's or Assemblymember's district office and introducing yourself or inviting them to visit your factory to see what you make and meet some employees.

Political ideology often takes a back seat to problem-solving in this space. Representatives want to understand what employers and families in their districts are experiencing and how state policy affects their day-to-day realities. These conversations help build relationships long before a crisis or policy debate emerges.

Legislators hope to hear what businesses are seeing on the ground such as workforce shortages, rising costs, regulatory complexity, or opportunities for growth. Initiating these relationships does not need to come with a specific request. These conversations ensure that Albany's decisions are informed by local, real-world experience. If you have not taken this step, there is no better time to start.

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