

Illinois Manufacturers' Association warns government is closing Illinois one day at a time

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Baise cites a devastating 35 percent loss of state manufacturing jobs in a span of just 16 years

SPRINGFIELD, IL – There's an urgent need that exists in Springfield to improve Illinois' manufacturing climate and to revitalize the middle class. The numbers are

striking: Illinois lost 10,900 good, high-paying manufacturing jobs in 2016 and more than 304,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000. Since the recession rebound began in 2009, Illinois' neighboring states have recovered and created more manufacturing jobs, such as Michigan with 163,700, Indiana with 90,800, Ohio with 76,700 and Wisconsin with 41,300, while Illinois is negative 1,600 manufacturing positions. Even Idaho, a state better known for potatoes, created 10,300 manufacturing jobs during this time frame. Drawing attention to this dilemma is Greg Baise, president and CEO of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA) who is addressing this topic statewide.

When the state's industry that contributes the single largest share to Illinois' GDP – 12.4 percent – loses nearly a quarter of well-paying, middle class positions, it becomes apparent that an Illinois manufacturing and middle class jobs revival is long overdue. On average, an Illinois manufacturing job, including benefits, pays \$74,000 annually, adding to the importance of why manufacturing jobs, and not lower-wage service sector positions, need to be created.

The IMA's **“Middle Class Manufacturing Agenda”** that focuses on five key points:

- **Get the state's fiscal house in order.** We need to restrain spending, balance the budget and adopt pension reform.
- **Enact meaningful workers' compensation reform.** Illinois can reduce costs on employers while still ensuring that injured workers receive quality health care by pushing back on union leaders, trial attorneys and special interests who are feeding off this system.
- **Reform the state's tax code.** The best tax systems are broad based with low rates. Illinois needs tax reform that includes permanent extensions of critical tax incentives.
- **Overhaul property taxes.** Stop shifting the tax burden onto commercial and industrial taxpayers.
- **Strengthen the education and workforce development system.** Illinois needs to ensure a pipeline of qualified workers for our global economy. As the baby boom generation retires, 30,000 manufacturing engineers and production technicians in Illinois will leave the workforce every year between now and 2028. Finding skilled workers and funding educational programs that do so need to be a top priority of policymakers.

“Since 2000, politicians have added 4,709 pages of laws and thousands of additional pages of rules and regulations for businesses to comply with in order to trade in Illinois and the result – a state that cannot run itself has become the expert on how to run a business, and it's closing the manufacturing industry,” said Baise. “Dictating wages, an

unnecessarily high cost workers' compensation program, high taxes and irresponsible spending puts manufacturers in a challenging position and many of them won't take it anymore."

The immediate and long-term solutions put forward in the Middle Class Manufacturing Agenda aim to challenge Illinois' existing state of affairs and bring industry back to the state. The IMA urges lawmakers to prioritize a manufacturing rebirth in Illinois in order to revitalize middle-class and help jumpstart the state's economy.

For more information, please go to <http://ima-net.org/jobs/>.

About the Illinois Manufacturer's Association

The Illinois Manufacturers' Association is the only statewide association dedicated exclusively to advocating, promoting and strengthening the manufacturing sector in Illinois. The IMA is the oldest and largest state manufacturing trade association in the United States, representing nearly 4,000 companies and facilities.