

# Stamping Journal

March 2007, Meet the Press

## Small tooling shops have a new voice in Washington

Fed up with the National Association of Manufacturers' (NAM) stance regarding China's currency manipulation and multi-national-friendly policies, the Michigan Tooling Association made a bold move and changed its name to the Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association (TMTA) to represent small and medium-size manufacturers.

The trouble began in June at a trade-policy meeting when NAM's small and midsize members organized to outvote larger members. As a result, the Chinese Currency Act [Hunter-Ryan bill (HR1498)] was endorsed by a 75-46 margin. Small tool-and diemakers were hopeful that NAM would be the first trade group to endorse broad sanctions against a major trading power.

Their hopes were dashed when NAM's executive committee voted last September not to support the currency manipulation bill. The NAM board is proportional to the dues structure of the organization: 70 percent large multinationals and 30 percent small and medium-sized manufacturers.

NAM's executive committee defended its decision of not supporting the bill because it said it would have been costly and wouldn't have made a difference in the long run.

Many small tool- and diemakers blame China for forcing shops to go [out] of business or drastically cut staff. Multinational companies such as Caterpillar and General Electric contend they need open and unfettered access to international markets, such as China.

China has become a deep division between small tool-and diemakers and large, multinational corporations. It's a situation reminiscent of David versus Goliath. Meanwhile, NAM is waiting to see if diplomatic pressure on China will help level the playing field.

Unfortunately, time isn't on many small manufacturers' side.

The number of tool- and diemakers in Michigan dropped 11 percent to 1,520 in 2002, down from 2,708 in 1997, according to recent U.S. Census figures.

Many small, domestic manufacturers feel betrayed by NAM's decision and are looking for a voice in Washington. As a result, TMTA has reserved the right to exclude multinationals to focus on small manufacturers.

One unified voice in Washington would create a powerful lobbying force. Until then, manufacturing will continue to be united on many domestic issues but fragmented on international trade issues.

To read more about the TMTA, see the News & Notes section lead news article, "Tooling association changes name, takes on China," on pg. 8.

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