

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1289

To provide a Federal charter to the Fab Foundation for the National Fab Lab Network, a national network of local digital fabrication facilities providing community access to advanced manufacturing tools for learning skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and producing personalized products.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 20, 2013

Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RUSH, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide a Federal charter to the Fab Foundation for the National Fab Lab Network, a national network of local digital fabrication facilities providing community access to advanced manufacturing tools for learning skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and producing personalized products.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “National Fab Lab Net-
3 work Act of 2013”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Scientific discoveries and technical innova-
7 tions are critical to the economic and national secu-
8 rity of the United States.

9 (2) Maintaining the leadership of the United
10 States in science, technology, engineering, and math-
11 ematics will require a diverse population with the
12 skills, interest, and access to tools required to ad-
13 vance these fields.

14 (3) Just as earlier digital revolutions in commu-
15 nications and computation provided individuals with
16 the Internet and personal computers, a digital revo-
17 lution in fabrication will allow anyone to make al-
18 most anything, anywhere.

19 (4) The Center for Bits and Atoms of the Mas-
20 sachusetts Institute of Technology (CBA) has con-
21 tributed significantly to the advancement of these
22 goals through its work in creating and advancing
23 digital fab labs in the United States and abroad.

24 (5) CBA’s fab labs provide a model for a new
25 kind of national laboratory that links local facilities

1 for advanced manufacturing to expand access and
2 empower communities.

3 (6) A coordinated national public-private part-
4 nership will be the most effective way to accelerate
5 the provision of this infrastructure for learning
6 skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and
7 producing personalized products.

8 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FAB LAB NETWORK.**

9 (a) FEDERAL CHARTER.—The Fab Foundation is
10 hereby granted a Federal charter as the National Fab Lab
11 Network (in this Act referred to as the “NFLN”). The
12 NFLN shall exist as a nonprofit entity whose purpose is
13 to facilitate the creation of a national network of local fab
14 labs, and to serve as a resource to assist stakeholders with
15 their effective operation.

16 (b) MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.—Eligibility
17 for membership in the NFLN and the rights and privi-
18 leges of members are as provided in the constitution and
19 bylaws of the NFLN. Directors, officers, and other staff
20 of the NFLN, and their powers and duties are as provided
21 in the bylaws of the NFLN.

22 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the NFLN shall
23 be the following:

1 (1) To serve as the coordinating body for the
2 creation of a national network of local fab labs in
3 the United States.

4 (2) To provide a first point of contact for orga-
5 nizations and communities seeking to create fab
6 labs, providing information, assessing suitability, ad-
7 vising on the lab lifecycle, and maintaining descrip-
8 tions of prospective and operating sites.

9 (3) To link funders and sites with operational
10 entities that can source and install fab labs, provide
11 training, assist with operations, account for spend-
12 ing, and assess impact.

13 (4) To perform outreach for individuals and
14 communities on the benefits available through the
15 NFLN.

16 (5) To facilitate use of the NFLN in synergistic
17 programs, such as workforce training, job creation,
18 research broader impacts, and the production of
19 civic infrastructure.

20 (6) To offer transparency in the management,
21 governance, and operation of the NFLN.

22 (d) PURPOSES.—In carrying out its functions, the
23 NFLN’s purposes and goals shall be—

1 (1) to create a national network of connected
2 local fab labs to empower individuals and commu-
3 nities in the United States;

4 (2) to foster the use of distributed digital fab-
5 rication tools to promote science, technology, engi-
6 neering and math skills, increase invention and inno-
7 vation, create businesses and jobs, and fulfill needs;
8 and

9 (3) to seek to establish at least one fab lab per
10 every 700,000 individuals in the United States in
11 the first ten years of its operation, corresponding to
12 availability in all 435 Congressional districts.

13 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “fab
14 lab” shall refer to a facility equipped with an integrated
15 suite of fabrication tools to convert digital designs into
16 functional physical things, and scanning tools to convert
17 physical things into digital designs, as exemplified by
18 CBA’s fab labs. These labs shall be available for a range
19 of individual and collaborative educational, commercial,
20 creative, and social purposes, with the NFLN to provide
21 guidelines for their sustainable operation.

22 (f) FUNDING.—The NFLN may accept funds from
23 private individuals, corporations, government agencies, or
24 other organizations.

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