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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

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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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''National Fab Lab Network Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Scientific discoveries and technical innovations are critical to the economic and national security of the United States.

(2) Maintaining the leadership of the United States in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will require a diverse population with the skills, interest, and access to tools required to advance these fields.

(3) Just as earlier digital revolutions in communications and computation provided individuals with the Internet and personal computers, a digital revolution in fabrication will allow anyone to make almost anything, anywhere.

(4) The Center for Bits and Atoms of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (CBA) has contributed significantly to the advancement of these goals through its work in creating and advancing digital fab labs in the United States and abroad.

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

for advanced manufacturing to expand access and empower communities.

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

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FAB LAB NETWORK.

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

(b) MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.—Eligibility for membership in the NFLN and the rights and privileges of members are as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the NFLN. Directors, officers, and other staff of the NFLN, and their powers and duties are as provided in the bylaws of the NFLN.

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

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

(2) To provide a first point of contact for organizations and communities seeking to create fab labs, providing information, assessing suitability, advising on the lab lifecycle, and maintaining descriptions of prospective and operating sites.

(3) To link funders and sites with operational entities that can source and install fab labs, provide training, assist with operations, account for spending, and assess impact.

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

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

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

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

(1) to create a national network of connected local fab labs to empower individuals and communities in the United States;

(2) to foster the use of distributed digital fabrication tools to promote science, technology, engineering and math skills, increase invention and innovation, create businesses and jobs, and fulfill needs; and

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

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

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

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