

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1705

To provide a Federal charter 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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2013

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. MARKEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide a Federal charter 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

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

4 (2) Maintaining the leadership of the United
5 States in science, technology, engineering, and math-
6 ematics will require a diverse population with the
7 skills, interest, and access to tools required to ad-
8 vance these fields.

9 (3) Just as earlier digital revolutions in commu-
10 nications and computation provided individuals with
11 the Internet and personal computers, a digital revo-
12 lution in fabrication will allow anyone to make al-
13 most anything, anywhere.

14 (4) Fab labs like the Center for Bits and Atoms
15 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology provide
16 a model for a new kind of national laboratory that
17 links local facilities for advanced manufacturing to
18 expand access and empower communities.

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

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

25 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

1 (1) the term “fab lab” means a facility—

2 (A) equipped with an integrated suite of
3 fabrication tools to convert digital designs into
4 functional physical things and scanning tools to
5 convert physical things into digital designs; and

6 (B) available for a range of individual and
7 collaborative educational, commercial, creative,
8 and social purposes, based on guidelines estab-
9 lished by the NFLN relating to sustainable op-
10 eration; and

11 (2) the term “NFLN” means the National Fab
12 Lab Network.

13 (b) FEDERAL CHARTER.—The National Fab Lab
14 Network is a federally chartered nonprofit corporation,
15 which shall facilitate the creation of a national network
16 of local fab labs and serve as a resource to assist stake-
17 holders with the effective operation of fab labs.

18 (c) MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Eligibility for membership in
20 the NFLN and the rights and privileges of members
21 shall be as provided in the constitution and bylaws
22 of the NFLN. The Board of Directors, officers, and
23 other employees of the NFLN, and their powers and
24 duties, shall be provided in the bylaws of the NFLN.

1 (2) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—The Board of Di-
2 rectors of the NFLN shall include—

3 (A) the Director of the Fab Foundation;

4 (B) members of the manufacturing sector
5 and entrepreneurial community; and

6 (C) leaders in science, technology, engi-
7 neering, and mathematics education.

8 (3) COORDINATION.—When appropriate, the
9 NFLN should work with Manufacturing Extension
10 Partnership Centers of the National Institute of
11 Standards and Technology, the Small Business Ad-
12 ministration, and other agencies of the Federal Gov-
13 ernment to provide additional resources to fab lab
14 users.

15 (d) FUNCTIONS.—The NFLN shall—

16 (1) serve as the coordinating body for the cre-
17 ation of a national network of local fab labs in the
18 United States;

19 (2) provide a first point of contact for organiza-
20 tions and communities seeking to create fab labs,
21 providing information, assessing suitability, advising
22 on the lab lifecycle, and maintaining descriptions of
23 prospective and operating sites;

24 (3) link funders and sites with operational enti-
25 ties that can source and install fab labs, provide

1 training, assist with operations, account for spend-
2 ing, and assess impact;

3 (4) perform outreach for individuals and com-
4 munities on the benefits available through the
5 NFLN;

6 (5) facilitate use of the NFLN in synergistic
7 programs, such as workforce training, job creation,
8 research broader impacts, and the production of
9 civic infrastructure; and

10 (6) offer transparency in the management, gov-
11 ernance, and operation of the NFLN.

12 (e) PURPOSES.—In carrying out its functions, the
13 NFLN’s purposes and goals shall be to—

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

17 (2) foster the use of distributed digital fabrica-
18 tion tools to promote science, technology, engineer-
19 ing and math skills, increase invention and innova-
20 tion, create businesses and jobs, and fulfill needs.

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

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