



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, & TRANSPORTATION

Senator Maria Cantwell

U.S. Senate Floor Speech on USICA going to Conference

April 28, 2022

[VIDEO](#)

CANTWELL: We're about to go to conference on the United States Innovation and Competition Act and the House America COMPETES Act. This is a long time coming. I want to thank Leader Schumer and Senator Wicker, also Senators Young and Cornyn, and other senators who worked hard to help us reach an agreement so we can have this process today.

Obviously, I hope my colleagues will vote yes to [this compound] motion and go to conference and allow for these various motions to instruct.

It's has been 324 days since the Senate passed this bill -- June 8, 2021 -- and it's been 488 days since we authorized the CHIPS program.

I'm here to implore my colleagues to get this done today and to say that we need to move faster.

We just heard yesterday from Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, who said, even in Ukraine, weapon replacement is being hindered by a lack of chips.

We know that we are facing other problems... Beijing with further lockdowns. What does that mean? It means fewer people producing product. It means more serious supply chain issues.

So, if you're serious about America's competition; Americans being allowed to build more and invest more in the United States; onshoring of our manufacturing supply chain; our competitiveness, then you want to vote yes and go to conference.

We've had so many letters in the last month, the American Society of Engineering Education, tech companies who believe in the competition and the opportunity that we've seen, writing us saying please get this legislation done.

And we've seen used car prices shoot up 40% because semiconductor shortages have basically created havoc in the automotive market.

And it's clear that our European and Asian counterparts aren't waiting. They're moving ahead trying to deal with the supply chain shortage, because as the Secretary also told us yesterday, the shortage is well defined. We know that it's going to last well into the future. That there is demand.

So the question for the world economy is: Are you going to try to meet that demand? And the answer is -- there are a lot of people that are going to try to meet that demand.

The question is are we going to try to meet that demand? And the longer we wait, the longer we take to meet that demand, the more the investment is attracted to go somewhere else.

Now, the United States of America believes in having the leading-edge semiconductor production and we're excited that that next generation of chips could do so many things for the smart appliances, smart tools, clean energy economy, obviously communications economy, next generation of all sorts of technology as it relates to our telecom sector.

But we need to get this bill done. We need to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate. And we need to have bipartisan support to show that the United States Senate can function legislatively on an issue that's not a mandatory or annual bill, but a process by which an issue, presented to us as a nation -- supply chain, competitiveness, manufacturing issues -- and we can get the job done.

We in the United States pride ourselves in being a nation of inventors. We are a leader in global technology. We know that we can solve our problems by solutions that we together -- business, and labor, and government, and R&D investment -- can bring the best ideas to fruition and help us as a nation.

But we have to show that we -- Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate -- can master the next step in the innovation process, and that is, what these underlying bills do. It basically allows us to dust off our R&D skills and say let's do more translational science.

So we've had lots of letters from people supporting tech hubs, investments of universities, working with business, in a centralized location to solve engineering problems and move ahead.

We have the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program. [M]any of our small and medium-sized businesses who need access to technology and supply chain data to better compete in a global economy and provide security -- want this legislation.

So the risks of inaction are too great to ignore. The U.S. Innovation and Competition Act is clearly part of our supply chain solutions.

I urge my colleagues to not only help us by invoking cloture and going to conference, but help us resolve these issues in a timely fashion so we can send a price signal about the investments that we want to make in the United States of America to make our nation and our manufacturers more competitive.