

## Rebuild United States by Retooling Auto Industry

*Ohio State Rep. Catherine Barrett (D-Cincinnati) introduced Concurrent Resolution HRC 22, printed here, in the Ohio House of Representatives.*

To memorialize the United States Congress to protect domestic auto manufacturers and to create a federal infrastructure development program to foster employment growth.

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio (the Senate concurring):

WHEREAS, Domestic auto manufacturers, such as Ford Motor Company and General Motors Company, are suffering great financial difficulties and need assistance from the federal government in order to avoid filing for bankruptcy; and

WHEREAS, Ford Motor Company employs approximately 15,000 Ohio residents and General Motors Company employs approximately 20,500 Ohio residents, all of whom could lose their jobs, including health and retirement benefits, if the companies are forced to file bankruptcy and close plants; and

WHEREAS, the domestic economy and domestic workers would substantially benefit from a federal infrastruc-

ture development program where the federal government would finance the repair, expansion, and improvement of national railway systems, water management systems, and power and electric systems; and

WHEREAS, Domestic auto manufacturers' plants are already equipped with the appropriate machine tools and production capability to assist in national infrastructure projects and this assistance would prevent many plants in Ohio and other states from closing and experiencing subsequent job loss; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the United States Congress to stimulate and sustain the national economy and foster employment for growing numbers of Ohio and United States citizens who would become unemployed and lose health and retirement benefits if domestic auto manufacturers continue to decline; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 126th General Assembly of the State of Ohio urges the Congress of the United States to protect the domestic auto industry and to create a federal infrastructure development program to utilize existing machine-tool resources and foster employment growth; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the House of Representative transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, to the President Pro Tempore and the Secretary of the United States Senate, to the members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and to the news media of Ohio.

This challenge provoked a very positive and excited response from both Representative Stewart and Barrett. Barrett embraced the idea and said, "We need action. The crisis is not going away. It is time to connect the dots." She announced that she would begin holding other hearings around the state, beginning with Cincinnati.

### Other Testimony

Bowen was followed by Delbert Cook, vice president of United Steelworkers Local 1915 from Fremont, Ohio. Cook testified on the impact of the collapse of industry in the state. He went through the collapse of the steel industry in great detail, and the loss of pensions and health care by the large number of steelworkers whom he personally knows to have lost their employment.

This motivated Barrett to say, "We have a great nation and a great state, and yet we are being ignored. People with skills and education are now unemployed, and not being put back into the workforce. We need change in Ohio and the country. The state cannot fund many programs to help people as we have no funds, as long as no jobs are being created to

generate revenue. This is a crisis, and we must treat it as a crisis. We built this country with our labor and we must address this now, and at the polls. We must stand shoulder to shoulder together and get this done."

A number of auto workers and officials took the podium after Cook to detail the crisis as it pervades the state. These included Tony Curington, vice president of local 696 in Dayton, and Rick Tincher, the Community Action Program representative of local 696. They gave eloquent testimony on the automobile crisis, and the need for a revamped trade policy, in addition to the infrastructure program. They detailed the horrible failure of NAFTA and called for a return to fair trade practices.

Other auto union members also spoke, and they were followed by Rep. Joyce Beatty, who praised Rep. Barrett for holding the hearing and vowed to bring the messages of the crisis and Barrett's retooling proposal to the Democratic House Caucus. She invited Barrett to be on the agenda when the Caucus meets in early March, to present her call to save the auto industry and revamp it along the lines that LaRouche has proposed.