



Opening Statement of Chairman Sam Graves
House Committee on Small Business
Hearing: “The Rise of 3D Printing: Opportunities for Entrepreneurs”
March 12, 2014

Good Afternoon. This hearing will come to order.

3D printing, or additive manufacturing, is the process of creating objects from a digital model, typically through the deposit of a material layer upon layer until an object is formed. Today, we are here to discuss how 3D printing is spurring innovation and entrepreneurship across America.

While the technology has been around since the 1980s, it has traditionally been used by large companies in industrial settings for rapid prototyping. But in the last ten years, 3D printers have become more affordable, opening the door for smaller businesses and entrepreneurs to begin benefitting from this technology. For instance, some models are now available for under \$1,500, and analysts expect prices to continue to fall.

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are using 3D printing in a variety of ways. It has the ability to save time and costs during the creation of prototypes, make highly-accurate parts that assist in product production, and produce finished products that may be sold directly to end-users. 3D printing has become, and will increasingly be, a critical component of the operations of many small businesses. While a number of entrepreneurs and at-home innovators are using it to print models of products they intend to manufacture with traditional methods, others are using the technology to create products from start to finish, sometimes all in the garage. As 3D printers continue to become both more affordable and advanced, the number of small businesses that begin as “household manufacturers” will likely skyrocket.

While some embrace and capitalize on new technologies, others are wary and cautious. As Congress and other regulatory bodies consider policies applicable to this and other technological advancements, it is important that they are not hasty and do not unduly restrict the ability of small business owners, entrepreneurs, and other innovators to help our economy grow.

We are fortunate to have with us a group of makers and users of the technology, including entrepreneurs that use 3D printing in their development of products. I look forward to hearing their insight on how small businesses are using this technology to grow and create jobs.

With that, I would like to thank our distinguished panel of witnesses for being here today and I now recognize the Ranking Member for her opening statement.