

The Columbus Dispatch Thursday October 4, 2012 4:27 PM
By [Dan Gearino](#)

Brown talks trade at Columbus Castings



Dan Gearino / Columbus Dispatch

Sen. Sherrod Brown speaks at Columbus Castings. On the far right is Rick Ruebusch, the company's CEO. Second from right is Timothy Penn, quality supervisor.

Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, chose one of the largest and oldest manufacturers in Columbus as the place to push back against alleged unfair trade practices by China.

Speaking at Columbus Castings on the South Side this morning, he urged House Speaker John Boehner, R-West Chester, to allow a vote on a trade measure that already passed the Senate.

"All we ask for in this country and all that I want for American manufacturing is a level playing field," Brown said.

Columbus Castings is a steel foundry with about 900 employees, making components for agricultural, mining and rail markets. It is the latest incarnation of a business that has operated on the site for 110 years.

The bill that passed the Senate would give the government broader power to take action when China manipulates the value of its currency. Advocates for U.S. manufacturing have long contended that China's government holds down the value of the currency, which makes U.S. products more expensive in China and makes Chinese products less expensive in other countries.

Ten Republican senators supported the measure, including Rob Portman of Ohio, but it is stalled in the House.

Boehner has previously said he opposes the bill because it would damage the country's relationship with a key trading partner.

Asked for comment, Boehner spokeswoman Brittany Brammell e-mailed the following: "The real questions Sen. Brown should be asking are why President Obama hasn't come out in support of this bill and why the administration has done nothing to advance the cause."

The president has raised concerns about China's currency issues, but has not commented about this bill.

Rick Ruebusch, CEO of Columbus Castings, said business has been good for the last few months, including sales to heavy-equipment maker Caterpillar Inc. and others. His sales include exports to China, a part of the business he thinks would expand if not for concerns about currency.

[@dispatchenergy](https://twitter.com/dispatchenergy)