

Bill would benefit smaller firms

By Tribune Chronicle

Small and medium companies would get more time on supercomputers if Congress approves a bill announced Monday by two Ohio lawmakers.

U.S. Rep. Timothy J. Ryan, D-Niles, and Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, say their companion bills would help those manufacturing firms develop new products as quickly as larger companies they compete against.

About 12 million people work for those smaller firms, Ryan said.

Almost all Fortune 500 companies already use the more powerful machines to design and test new products.

“If we are serious about ensuring that all businesses, and all Americans share in the prosperity that globalization can create, then we need to provide them with the tools necessary to take advantage of the new economy,” Ryan said.

Voinovich said, “We all know that intensifying global competition has caused a steady decline in our manufacturing economy. Nowhere is that more apparent than in states like Ohio and throughout the Midwest.”

He said the use of supercomputers can help reverse that trend.

Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., is a co-sponsor of the Senate bill.

The bill would provide \$25 million per year to create up to five Advanced Multidisciplinary Computing Software Centers at academic supercomputer sites, such as the Ohio Supercomputer Center at The Ohio State University.

The centers would create a repository of advanced federally-funded software for businesses; work with independent software companies to transform federal research into software that small and medium-size businesses can use; and provide access to the new computational tools and techniques the companies need to compete.