

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

Thank you for your past support of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program. As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we ask you for your continued support and, specifically, for increased funding for the program to \$140.4 million.

The MEP program is our nation's only network of public-private partnerships that delivers support for small- and medium-sized manufacturers in every state. It connects manufacturers with the critical resources necessary to compete globally. It offers support systems that lead to greater supply chain integration. And it helps firms invest in their processes, technologies, and workforces in order to improve efficiency and grow.

These services benefit our economy. In Fiscal Year 2015, according to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), MEP helped create \$8 billion in sales, \$1.2 billion in cost savings, and \$3.2 billion in total investment in U.S. manufacturing. Over 68,000 jobs were created or retained as a result of the program's efforts.

In addition, the program provides a tremendous return on investment to taxpayers. Again, according to NIST, every one dollar of federal investment in MEP generates \$17 in new sales growth and \$24 in new client investment. These improvements generate \$2.3 billion annually.


An increase in funding will improve staffing at MEP centers so manufacturers have system-wide access to critical assistance. According to the American Small Manufacturers Coalition, an additional \$10 million in funding for MEP would increase the number of manufacturers participating in the program by 40 percent over the next three years. It would drive an additional \$800 million in new or retained sales and an additional \$140 million in cost savings.

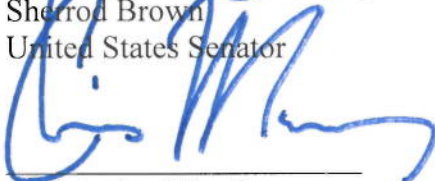
Our unemployment rate has declined significantly over the past several years. But there are still 8.8 million unemployed workers. By investing in our manufacturing sector, which has long helped families reach the middle class, we can assist these workers and grow small- and medium-sized American businesses.

MEP is a cost-effective investment that bolsters American competitiveness. We respectfully ask that you provide robust funding for the MEP center network in your upcoming appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

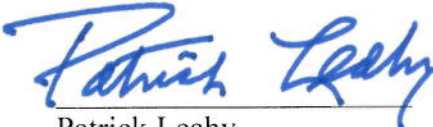

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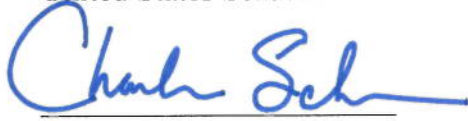

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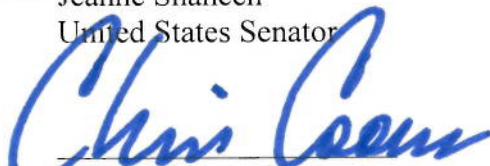

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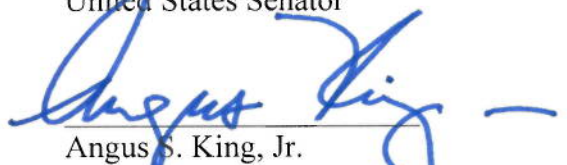

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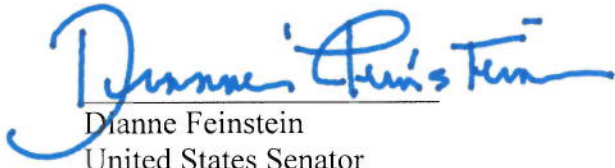

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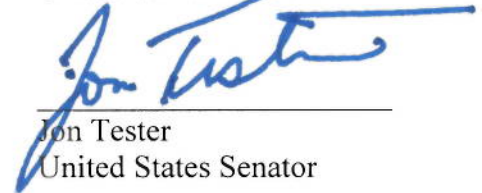
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