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May 4, 2012

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop
United States House of Representatives
2429 Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

On behalf of the employers and businesses in our community, we urge you to prevent the closure of Job Corps centers. As you know, the Job Corps program is vital to the Greater Albany region, and the loss of Job Corps centers would have a devastating impact to our local economy.

Like many rural regions, the Greater Albany Area suffers from a disproportionately high unemployment rate and a dwindling tax base. Adding to those challenges is a pressing need among employers to develop a workforce-ready population. We know Job Corps works for employers. No national career preparation program is more closely aligned with local and regional employers and their needs. These employers actively work with their local centers to customize training to meet their needs in 100 different trades in 11 major industries. No other program offers local employers a comparable opportunity to shape curricula in so many occupations. Small businesses, which make up 80% of our membership, work closely with Job Corps centers because these centers reliably produce skilled and responsible workers who can contribute to their growth.

From an economic development standpoint, we know every dollar invested in the program, \$2 is returned via the purchasing of goods and services in the community. As a result, the average Job Corps center directly and indirectly supports 228 local jobs. Nationally, the 125 Job Corps centers support 30,000 jobs, the vast majority of them in the private sector.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, Job Corps works! It is our nation's most effective career preparation program for economically disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 24, who might otherwise cost our communities and taxpayers billions of dollars over the course of their lifetimes. Job Corps reverses that drain, helping 85 percent of its graduates to secure a job, enter higher education, or enlist in the Armed Forces.

Please consider a personal endorsement for the good work Job Corps does in the Greater Albany community and nationwide. Please help us to prevent the closure of any of the 125 Job Corps centers across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah V. Bowie".

Deborah V. Bowie, IOM
Senior Director of Public Policy and Communications
Albany Area Chamber of Commerce