



The Charleston Regional
Chamber of Commerce

May 16, 2012

The Honorable Jay Rockefeller
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

The Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce represents 600 local businesses and their 40,000 employees. Our mission is to create jobs and opportunity for our region.

Attracting and retaining quality employees is central to this mission. Time and time again, businesses tell us that their number one challenge is finding and keeping qualified workers at all levels, from entry to executive. Without a strong workforce, businesses cannot thrive and our region will not realize the many opportunities on the horizon.

The Job Corps program plays an important role developing a workforce that enables businesses to succeed. Job Corps works with local employers to identify workforce needs and develop customized training to address those needs in 100 different trades in 11 major industries. Small businesses in our communities work closely with their Job Corps centers because these centers reliably produce skilled and responsible workers who can contribute to a company's growth.

Job Corps also works for our local communities. Every dollar invested in the program brings in about \$2 to the local economy through purchase of goods and services. 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 which are in the private sector.

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, because 85 percent of graduates secure a job, enter higher education, or enlist in the military.

To ensure our country and region has continued economic growth and a well-trained workforce, our nation has a responsibility to invest in smart programs that have a proven track record of success. Job Corps is one of the most worthwhile investments toward these goals. For the sake of the youth, the program services, the employers who hire them, and our communities, we urge you to support the Job Corps and work to prevent the closure of any of the 125 Job Corps centers across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Ballard".

Matthew G. Ballard
President
Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce