

May 2, 2012

The Honorable Mark Begich
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Begich:

On behalf of the employers and businesses in our communities, we urge you to prevent the closure of Job Corps centers. The Job Corps program is vital to our communities, and the loss of Job Corps centers would be devastating to our economies, both at a local and national level.

Job Corps works for employers. No national career preparation program is more closely allied 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 in our communities work closely with their Job Corps centers because these centers reliably produce skilled and responsible workers who can contribute to a small business' growth.

Job Corps also works for our local communities. Every dollar invested in the program results in about \$2 in economic activity in the local economy because of 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 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 that 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.

On a personal level, I have been to many Job Corps functions here in Palmer, AK. These young individuals are being taught the right way. They are courteous, professional and well-versed in how to deal with the general public and potential employers. They also are taught the value in giving back to the community. Job corps students and administrators are regular volunteers for local events. Job Corps is definitely a value-added program that we cannot do without.

To ensure our country 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, Congress should prevent the closure of any of the 125 Job Corps centers across the country.

Sincerely,



Ralph Renzi
Executive Director
Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce



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