



**May 31, 2012**

**The Honorable Senator Tom Harkin**

**731 Hart Senate Office Building**

**Washington, DC 20510**

**Dear Senator Harkin,**

**I am writing today in support of Job Corps Centers in general and the Ottumwa Job Corps in particular. Understanding that budget cuts are always a possibility, especially in today's environment; this letter is intended to communicate to you how important the Ottumwa Job Corps is to its students, to our community, and to our employers. I encourage you to make Job Corps Center funding a priority.**

**Job Corps is one of the government programs that works well, as intended. Job Corps provides excellent skill training in various trades for its students, enabling them to find meaningful and well paying jobs. The classroom education that Job Corps students receive is equally valuable in allowing them to become active and engaged members of our community. Most of the students upon graduation from the Ottumwa Job Corps will find employment, go on to higher education, or join the military.**

**The City of Ottumwa and Wapello County benefits from a well run Job Corps Facility that allows young people an opportunity to reach their full potential. Job Corps students and staff spend many volunteer hours with city and charitable organizations, contributing valuable time that is needed to make our community inviting and welcoming.**

**Local employers looking for skilled workers need look no further than Job Corps. Along with the pool of local talent that Job Corps creates; Job Corps also employs more than 100 people and purchases many of its goods and services from local businesses. Ottumwa Job Corps is a valued member of our community and provides skills and opportunities for young people that might otherwise not be available.**

**Thank you very much for your time and consideration. It is my hope that you will continue to make the funding of Job Corps Centers a priority nationwide, as we have had nothing but a great experience with our Ottumwa Job Corps in Ottumwa, Iowa.**

**Regards,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David R. Barajas, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**David R. Barajas, Jr.**

**Executive Director**

**Ottumwa Economic Development Corporation**