

415 E. Railroad Avenue* Wasilla, Alaska 99654



Telephone (907)376-1299 * Fax: (907)373-2560

Email: contact@wasillachamber.org

Home Page: www.wasillachamber.org

Voted "Alaska's Outstanding Chamber of Commerce of the Year ~ 1998 & 2006"

March 10, 2012

The Honorable Mark Begich

Dear Senator Begich:

On behalf of the Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, we urge you to prevent the closure of Job Corps centers, particularly in Palmer, Alaska. The Job Corps program is vital to our communities and the loss of Job Corps centers would be troubling to our fragile economy.

Job Corps works for employers. No national career preparation program is more closely allied with local and regional employers and their needs. The employers in our borough actively work with the Palmer Job Corp Center to customize training to meet 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.

Job Corps also works for our local communities. Every dollar invested in the program is doubled and results in about \$2 in economic activity in the local economy due to 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.

More important than the investment in our local economy is the investment Job Corp makes on our future leaders. Statistics show that it is our nation's most effective career preparation program for economically disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24 who may otherwise cost our communities and taxpayers billions of dollars over the course of their lifetimes. Job Corps reverses this brain drain, because 85 percent of graduates secure a job, enter higher education, or enlist in the military and serve this great country.

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,



Paula Nance
President

Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce