

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

February 22, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad, Chairman  
The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad and Ranking Member Gregg:

We are writing to express our strong and continued support for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program (MEP) and to urge inclusion of \$122 million for the MEP in your fiscal year 2009 budget resolution. This request is equal to the full authorization level set in the America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) enacted in 2007.

The MEP is an invaluable federal program that provides technical assistance to small- and medium-sized manufacturers, enabling them to enhance productivity and competitiveness and thus create and retain jobs in the United States.

The MEP's statutory objective is to "...enhance productivity and technological performance in United States manufacturing." MEP centers achieve this objective by enabling smaller manufacturers to use existing and cutting-edge manufacturing technologies and processes currently employed by larger manufacturers. Additionally, MEP Centers facilitate the dissemination of scientific, engineering, technical, and management information to smaller manufacturers.

Today, MEP centers offer services that far exceed Congress' expectation at the time of the program's inception. MEP centers not only engage in technology transfer, but also streamline internal and production processes, identify cost inefficiencies, and train workers to adapt to the ever-changing technology environment. MEP centers also assist manufacturers with product innovation and market analysis to enable corporate growth.

Over time, the MEP has profoundly impacted U.S. manufacturing, strengthened its own internal performance, and enhanced services, even in the face of level funding. Despite level federal funding since fiscal year 1999, the MEP has continued to increase its impact on the small manufacturing sector. For instance, as a direct consequence of clients' MEP assistance:

- The MEP has steadily increased its cost savings to participating manufacturers, from \$316 million in fiscal year 1999 to \$1.115 billion in fiscal year 2006;
- MEP participants' increased and retained sales have grown from \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 1999 to \$6.765 billion in fiscal year 2006; and
- The MEP has also increased the amount of domestic manufacturing jobs created and retained, from 19,572 in fiscal year 1999 to 52,585 in fiscal year 2006.

FY2009 Manufacturing Extension Partnership Budget Request  
Committee on the Budget

Furthermore, the MEP uses its federal funding to leverage private investment. Local MEP centers have created partnerships with hundreds of universities and community colleges as well as state and local training facilities.

The federal government's return on a relatively modest investment justifies funding the MEP at its fully authorized levels. The funding will allow the program to continue to succeed in increasing the productivity and innovation of small manufacturers, allowing them to continue to compete globally and flourish in the United States.

Thank you for considering this funding in the fiscal year 2009 Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,



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Joseph I. Lieberman



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Olympia J. Snowe



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Debbie Stabenow



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Herb Kohl



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Jack Reed



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Susan M. Collins



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Edward M. Kennedy



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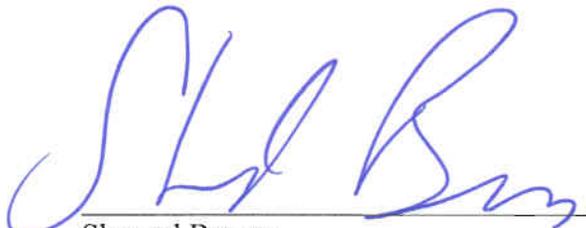
Arlen Specter



Carl Levin



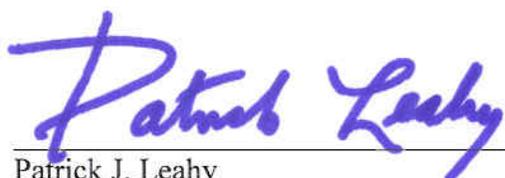
Barack Obama



Sherrod Brown



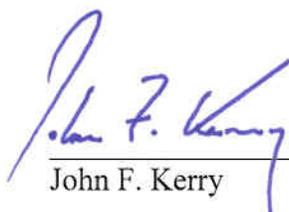
Richard G. Lugar



Patrick J. Leahy



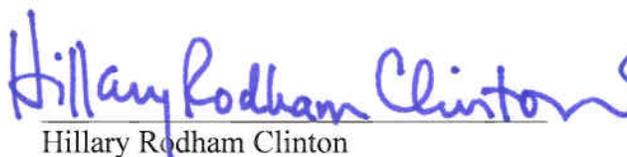
David Vitter



John F. Kerry



Pat Roberts



Hillary Rodham Clinton



Robert Menendez



Robert P. Casey, Jr.



Christopher J. Dodd



Evan Bayh



Richard J. Durbin



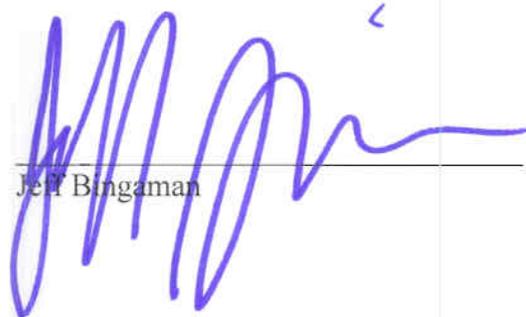
Russell D. Feingold



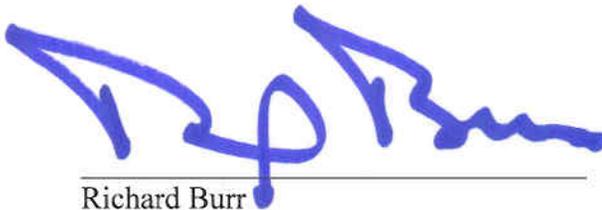
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.



Mary L. Landrieu



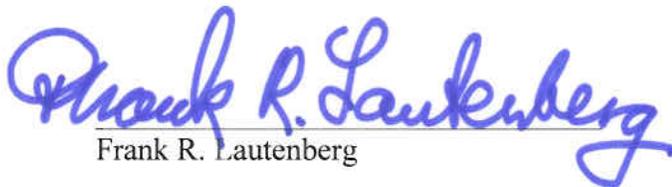
Jeff Bingaman



Richard Burr



John Warner



Frank R. Lautenberg

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