

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
PENNSYLVANIA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 19, 2021

Ms. Linda Cruz-Carnall
Regional Director
US Economic Development Administration
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Ms. Cruz-Carnall:

I am writing this letter in support of Southwestern Pennsylvania's Build Back Better Regional Challenge Application. This region is recognized as our nation's leading edge in robotics and artificial intelligence (AI). Now, coupled with a commitment to centering equity and sustainable development, this proposal presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate technology development and secure an equitable economic future for the region, and all Pennsylvanians.

I am informed that Southwestern Pennsylvania is uniquely positioned to take this to the next level by utilizing the knowledge base and expertise from hundreds of robotics and AI technologies to drive a renewed commitment to true economic prosperity. Leaders from all corners and sectors of the region have come together because of the potential for technology to positively transform thousands more small and medium enterprises. Throughout history, this region has withstood the impact of major shifts in domestic economic and geopolitical sectors. Demonstrating time and again how to rely on one another, work together to reconfigure a region's economy, responsibly utilize resources, protect families and provide opportunity among workers and entrepreneurs of all backgrounds, is its brand.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Coalition concept proposal includes educational, business and community representation from 11 counties with 2.7 million constituents; 20% of Pennsylvania's population. As a Coal Community, Southwestern Pennsylvania also faces challenges to ensure the advancement of dislocated workers, entrepreneurs, and existing small and medium enterprises. It's my understanding that this proposal explains the steps for technology cluster growth that is emphasizes career pathways for traditionally under-represented constituencies. As it appears, it provides for holistic support to students and workers accessing new careers by addressing barriers such as lack of childcare, transportation, or educational prerequisites for more than 12,000. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Children and Families, achieving an equitable well-being for Pennsylvania's families is critically important. I am pleased to support this application and I hope you will join me to support this effort.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator