



101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 600 West, Washington, DC 20001

March 30, 2009

Arizona State University
California State University –
13 Member Schools
City University of New York –
City College
Florida International University
Georgia State University
Indiana University-Purdue
University Indianapolis
Morgan State University
North Carolina State University
Ohio State University
Portland State University
Temple University
Tennessee State University
University of Akron
University of Central Florida
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado – Denver
University of Houston
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Louisville
University of Memphis
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri –
Kansas City
University of New Mexico
University of New Orleans
Virginia Commonwealth
University
Wichita State University

The Hon. Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee Commerce,
Justice, Science
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Rep.
H-310 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Commerce,
Justice, Science
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Rep.
H-310 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

On behalf of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU), we urge you to increase funding for the University Centers program at the Economic Development Administration to \$20 million for fiscal year 2010, enabling additional centers to be established in the top 100 metro areas in the United States.

USU is a network of public urban research universities that represents every region of our country. University presidents created USU to leverage the intellectual capital and economic power of urban universities, thereby improving urban life and America's competitiveness in the global economy. To this end, USU is focused on three major issues -- creating a competitive workforce, building strong communities, and improving the health of a diverse population.

As anchors for our nation's cities and greater metro areas, public urban research universities are uniquely positioned with a broad range of skills and resources – intellectual, human, technological, and social – to collaborate with our communities in addressing various urban challenges. USU institutions are making significant investments in community engagement. Our campuses provide technical assistance and support to local and regional businesses and organizations. Through our work these groups strengthen their capability and scope to pursue economic development projects and activities.

The federal government recognized the important role universities can play within their communities by establishing and funding the University Centers program in 1966. The program focuses on economic development in distressed communities. It is the only federal program that uses university expertise and resources to build capacity and provide service to local and

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regional economic development organizations. Despite its unique role, the average annual funding per University Centers decreased substantially over each subsequent decade. Today, nine states are currently without University Centers and a number of major metropolitan areas do not have access to these technical assistance providers as well.

Although we recognize the tight fiscal climate surrounding the allocation of federal funds, USU strongly encourages you to increase funding for these important University Centers. Through these and similar endeavors to tie public urban research universities with their communities, we will continue to bolster our nation's economic competitiveness and make our cities a better place to live. USU looks forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues as you finalize an appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy L. Zimpher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "Z".

Nancy L. Zimpher
Chair, Coalition of Urban Serving Universities
President, University of Cincinnati