



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. Barbara Mikulski  
Chairman  
Subcommittee Commerce,  
Justice, Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
144 Dirksen  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee Commerce,  
Justice, Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
144 Dirksen  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

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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The Honorable Richard Shelby  
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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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

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