Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2016

The Honorable Tom Perez
Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Perez:

We write to ask that you give full and fair consideration to Washington state's grant application – entitled "Registered Apprenticeship Initiative for System Expansion in Washington" (RAISE Washington) – for the U.S. Department of Labor ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant program. RAISE Washington includes an ambitious effort to coordinate state agency resources, recruit new employers, and advance apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

Given Washington State's robust aerospace and tech industries there is a significant need for highly-skilled workers. By some estimates, there are more than 25,000 unfilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics positions in Washington State, and as a result there is demand for creative and forward-thinking workforce models like the Registered Apprenticeship (RA). As a highly successful workforce development model, RA is in a position to advance our state's workforce system goals of: (1) assisting a larger volume of people find and maintain good jobs, with a focus on disadvantaged populations; (2) supporting employers' efforts to close skill gaps, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

At the heart of RAISE Washington is a plan for a Systems Integration Team to coordinate apprenticeship expansion, agency collaboration, workforce systems integration, and diversity outreach efforts across key workforce development agencies including the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Employment Security Department, the State Board for Community & Technical Colleges and the Department of Labor & Industries.

As Washington state continues to embrace this integrated approach to expanding and diversifying apprenticeship opportunities, we appreciate the opportunity to bring this highly relevant and important application to your attention. We ask that you give full and fair consideration to Washington state's grant application and look forward to working with you on a federal level to promote apprenticeships and expand the skills of our workforce.

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Sincerely,

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

David Reichert
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Denny Heck
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Dan Newhouse
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