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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0914

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2188 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3376

TAMPA DISTRICT OFFICE:
2130 W. MAIN STREET
TAMPA, FL 33607
(813) 871-2817

ST. PETERSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE:
136 FOURTH STREET NORTH
SUITE 201
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701
(727) 369-0201

castor.house.gov

June 2, 2025

Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

RE: Reverse Arbitrary Closure of Pinellas County Job Corps Center and Harsh Impact on Students

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

Thank you for the opportunity to relay my deep concern for the Department of Labor's (DOL) decision to suddenly and arbitrarily close the Pinellas County, Florida Job Corps Center and cast 300 students into an uncertain future. I respectfully urge you to reverse the decision and answer the questions posed below.

For decades, Job Corps has provided a vital pathway to education, job training and self-sufficiency for young people who deserve a second chance. I am concerned, however, that DOL has proposed dismantling Job Corps, contrary to the direction of Congress. I have heard from local teachers and students how the sudden and arbitrary closure will undercut the mission and leave students in the lurch. The Pinellas County Job Corps Center serves 300 students who hail from across the state of Florida, 285 of whom receive housing, and employs 124 staff members. This order will displace students in the midst of their training, create housing insecurity, lay off dedicated staff and leave communities scrambling to fill the gap.

Staff and students have raised concerns about the cancellation of national contracts that provide critical services such as Wi-Fi access on-site, the halt of background checks for applicants, thus stopping the enrollment process, and now the pause of operations at all contractor-operated Job Corps centers scheduled to occur by June 30, 2025. This comes after the Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) released the first-ever [Job Corps Transparency Report](#). This report analyzed the financial performance and operational costs of the most recently available metrics of program year 2023. Coming to such a swift decision is both alarming and hasty.

Please answer the following questions by June 15, 2025:

- The Job Corps Transparency Report claims there are less than 25,000 students participating in Job Corps nationally. What data was used to determine this number?
- How many students receive housing through this initiative?
- The report claims that the graduation rate is less than 38.6 percent. Why was the analysis not performed on a date range larger than July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024?
- How are the impacts of COVID-19 taken into consideration?
- The analysis weighs incident occurrences against outcomes. What criteria are used to determine what an “incident” is?
- The report claims that the initiative is no longer meeting set outcomes. How have graduates’ wages compared to wage goals set by DOL for the last 10 years?
- Are there efficient structural changes that can be made prior to stopping operations?

The report suggests the initiative has become expensive, yet Job Corps has not received a funding increase in 8 years. This move will upend more than 60 years of progress, leaving current and future at-risk young people with one less pipeline to personal and professional development. Halting Job Corps contracts will deepen inequality and rob young people in need of critical tools to thrive. DOL should be investing in our communities and resources with effective tools like Job Corps to break the cycle of poverty and help young people succeed. I trust that we share the same goal of serving all Americans and bolstering our workforce. I respectfully urge you to delay the pause in operations, review this Transparency Report and include a longer dataset for analysis, and take actions to ensure the success of Jobs Corps.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Legislative Assistant, Capreece Kelsaw, at Capreece.Kelsaw@mail.house.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida – District 14

Cc: Melissa Tran, Pinellas County Job Corps Director