

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

I write to urge the U.S. House of Representatives to swiftly pass H.R. 4521, the *America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology and Economic Strength Act of 2022* (“America COMPETES Act”).

Our country stands at a pivotal moment as Congress acts to make historic investments in science and technology, in creating and supporting American jobs, and in securing our nation’s economic future. As we work to turn the corner on this once-in-a-century pandemic, one of the most important things Congress can do is make sure workers, employers, and communities in our states have adequate resources to continue pushing our economy forward.

I was proud to champion the Senate-passed *U.S. Innovation and Competition Act* (S. 1260) to make exactly these investments, and I urge the House to expeditiously move forward with the America COMPETES Act to boost American competitiveness globally and to create generations of stable, high-paying jobs for working families in Georgia and across the country. The America COMPETES Act will increase resiliency to America’s supply chains, decrease the reliance on other countries for our critical industries, maintain our nation’s status as the world leader in advanced technology, and increase the amount of scientific research done in the United States—helping lead to innovative technologies that will spur job creation here at home. That is how we create jobs that lift workers and communities up and keep America on the cutting edge.

I want to highlight just a few provisions that will drive critical federal investments to Georgia and support jobs across the state:

- **Supply Chain Resiliency.** I am glad to see that this bill addresses supply chain resiliency head-on, including by creating the Critical Supply Chain Resilience Program at the Department of Commerce. I was proud to introduce, with my colleague Senator Tammy Baldwin and others, legislation that creates this program and authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants, loans, and loan guarantees to support and strengthen supply chains. These investments will help keep jobs in the United States, fight against rising costs by decreasing the price volatility for goods and services, and ensure that hardworking Georgia families can continue to access the products and goods they need. I

have long maintained that the supply chain issues facing a small business manufacturer in Valdosta or Rome, Georgia are simply not the same as those in California, Indiana, or New York. Therefore, I strongly support provisions in the America COMPETES Act that give businesses across the nation straightforward ways to report supply chain challenges and encourage partnerships between federal actors and state and local governments.

- **Domestic Semiconductor Production.** The America COMPETES Act will also tackle one of the most acute supply chain shortages facing Georgia’s manufacturers and consumers: the lack of semiconductors. These materials are essential inputs for companies that provide thousands of good-paying jobs in Georgia, manufacturing products ranging from automobiles to ATMs to medical devices. Last year, the Kia Motors plant located in West Point, Georgia had to shut down twice due to a semiconductor shortage. They lost two weeks of production, which does not just harm the 2,700 workers at the West Point Plant. It also harmed their families, the jobs created by their local suppliers, and the entire community. We are very proud that another major automobile manufacturer, Rivian Motors, recently announced they would open a factory in Georgia employing up to 7,500 people. Continued semiconductor shortages will also harm their businesses. And, these shortages are not limited to a single sector. A major technology company in Georgia is NCR Corporation, which produces ATMs and point-of-sale systems—critical technology for small businesses and consumers, especially as consumer habits have shifted over the course of the pandemic to contactless payments. They, too, have experienced significant delays due to the semiconductor shortage. The \$52 billion in semiconductors funding included in the America COMPETES Act will be critical to boosting the domestic production of semiconductors, reducing our reliance on foreign producers, and protecting Georgia’s workers and families.
- **Regional Hubs for Technology, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship.** The America COMPETES Act authorizes \$7 billion to spur regional technology hubs and create new ecosystems of innovation and entrepreneurship all across the country. When our scientific and technology sectors are only concentrated in certain parts of the country, we miss the amazing possibility across our entire nation. Last month, I was pleased to be with Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo in Atlanta, Georgia to announce that the Georgia Artificial Intelligence Manufacturing Technology Corridor was a finalist in the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, created through the *American Rescue Plan Act*. These incredible investments will help support jobs up and down the supply chain and foster small business creation by lowering capital costs and increasing manufacturing. This project is only one example of what is possible when we support communities across America. Greater support for these regional technology hubs helps create jobs, bridge students, businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers in many more parts of Georgia, and enables families and communities to compete in the innovation economy.
- **STEM Workforce Development and Diversity.** This legislation will help underrepresented communities access opportunities to join the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce and contribute to our nation’s scientific and technological advancement. From George Washington Carver’s study of our soil to Katherine Johnson’s equations about space flight, scientists of color have shaped the

world we live in, yet women and people of color are severely underrepresented in our STEM workforce. America cannot maintain its leadership in science and technology unless we invest in all of our future researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs who create the next small businesses and propel industries forward. I am glad that this bill's investments in broadening STEM participation, which includes some of my priorities to enhance rural STEM education and to lower barriers for the recruitment and retention of scientists from underrepresented communities, will help Georgians across the state access educational and economic opportunities to launch them into good-paying, high-quality jobs.

- **HBCU Investments.** I was glad to see that the America COMPETES Act includes funding to assist Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in building out their educational and research capacities. This provision is based on a program that I introduced in the Senate-passed *U.S. Innovation and Competition Act*. However, I encourage the House of Representatives to fund this level at the same levels as the Senate: \$150 million for each of fiscal years 2022-2026. A recent report from the National Science Foundation found that just 30 institutions account for 42% of all R&D spending by colleges and universities across America. None of these 30 institutions were HBCUs or MSIs. In fact, not a single HBCU in the entire country is included in our nation's designation for the highest level of research universities, an 'R1' or Very High Research Activity university. Funding the capacity-building programs for developing universities at the levels in USICA will be critical to enabling these institutions to hire new administrative staff, train faculty on the grant process, and increase their ability to move products to the market, either on their own or through collaboration with small business or other industry partners. This will enable priceless Georgia institutions from Morehouse School of Medicine to Fort Valley State University that sow into our state's economy and workforce to build up their institutional research capacity, and compete on equal footing for additional R&D funding. To innovate and seize the jobs of the future, we must invest in HBCUs and MSIs, who have long punched above their weight when it comes to supporting our country's innovation and scientific workforce.

I believe that the America COMPETES Act will create good-paying jobs, strengthen our supply chains, enhance our global competitiveness, and expand opportunities for Georgia's hardworking families and children. I urge the House of Representatives to swiftly pass this bill to boost scientific and economic growth in every corner of Georgia and across the country.

Sincerely,



Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator