

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904  
April 14, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer  
Secretary  
Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

I write to you today concerning the Department of Labor (DOL) announcement prohibiting new enrollments at the Penobscot Job Corps Center (Penobscot) and the Loring Job Corps Center (LJCC) in Maine. These two Job Corp centers have been instrumental in training students to address workforce needs in Maine, preparing students for military service, and providing needed education for disadvantaged young adults.

LJCC currently has 129 staff members and is one of the largest employers in rural northern Maine. This center opened in 1997, just a few years after the closure of the Loring Air Force Base devastated the local community. The 228 students currently enrolled at LJCC have chosen this site because its rural location allows the students to focus on their education and training. LJCC has a strong relationship with the shipbuilding industry at both Bath Iron Works (BIW) and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNSY), two locations in Maine where ships are built, and submarines are overhauled and refueled for our country's Navy. One hundred percent of the students who have graduated from LJCC in the past nine months have either entered the workforce or are pursuing further training. The DOL directive to no longer accept new enrollments at LJCC noted increased operating costs and decreased enrollment as the cause of the decision. LJCC has, however, operated on a fixed contract price for the past four years. LJCC entered into the contract agreement during the COVID-19 pandemic and has managed to operate on this fixed price even with significant inflation in operating costs. Currently, LJCC is at 89% capacity. This is an increase from 80% when LJCC first reopened in November 2020 after a brief closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the education and training provided at LJCC, students volunteer thousands of hours in the local community as the Color Guard for veterans' events and repaving walkways in local parks, to name a few.

At present, the Penobscot Job Corps has 223 students enrolled, and 65 students have graduated since July 2024. In addition to those 65 graduates, five have transferred to other Centers for advanced training opportunities. Since July of 2024, 58 students have been verified as placements into employment, the military, or higher education. One student went into a registered apprenticeship. Penobscot also has a strong relationship with the shipbuilding industry, particularly with BIW and PNSY. Penobscot is home to the only Advanced Marine Pipefitting training program in Job Corps, which is a feeder program for future BIW and PNSY employees.

The Loring and Penobscot Job Corps Centers have compiled an impressive record of success in preparing disadvantaged youth for the workplace or higher education. I am very concerned by the decision to immediately prevent students from entering the programs in Maine's two centers. While we must certainly do all we can to ensure the appropriate use of federal funds during these challenging budgetary times, we must also maintain a commitment to successful programs that are important to the economic health of our communities. I urge you to use your authority as Secretary of the Department of Labor to reverse the decision that would, in essence, shutter Maine's two Job Corps Centers. Penobscot and LJCC have both supported the economic vitality and community development of their respective areas for decades and losing these centers would be detrimental to both communities as well as to the young people they serve.

I write to ask you to lift the current halt on enrollment at these Job Corps centers that are so vital to Maine communities. Thank you for taking the time to address this important matter.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator