

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Alexander Acosta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW C-2318
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Perdue and Secretary Acosta,

I write to express strong opposition to the U.S. Department of Labor and Department of Agriculture's decision to terminate the interagency agreement that provides for the operation of 25 Civilian Conservation Centers (CCC) within the U.S. Forest Service, and in particular the proposed immediate closure of the Blackwell Job Corps Center near Laona, Wisconsin.

When I travel around Wisconsin, I hear repeatedly about the need to skill up our nation's workforce. I hear from employers who are turning away work, or are unable to compete for business because they can't find the skilled workers needed to fill open jobs. I also hear from students who are anxious to work and start a career but are unable to get the training they need to secure employment.

The mission of the Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers is to train eligible youth, ages 16 to 24, with educational, social and vocational skills, while assisting in the conservation of the Nation's public natural resources. The majority of Forest Service Job Corps students come from low-income communities, both urban and rural, who are seeking pathways to prosperity. The Blackwell Job Corps Center is also important to our Northwoods' community and rural economy because it provides good paying jobs for 54 workers.

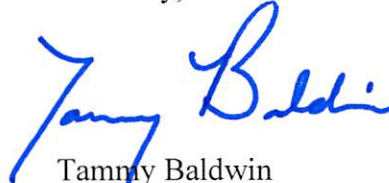
The proposal to close nine Centers, including the Blackwell Center based on the review of "the CCCs performance and outcome measurements" doesn't support the most recent performance data provided by the Department of Labor. The Blackwell Center is ranked 14th overall according to the Department of Labor's most recent Center Report Card out of 131 Job Corps centers located throughout the entire United States, including privately operated Job Corps Centers outside the operation of the U.S. Forest Service.

Media reports indicate that the Trump Administration reversed course and decided not to close a Job Corps facility in Montana that was also slated for closure. For 55 years, the Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center has helped expand economic opportunities and provide job training to young adults in rural Wisconsin. I urge you to

reconsider your ill-timed proposal to close the Blackwell Job Corps Conservation Corps Center. And, I urge both of your Departments to ensure it remains open so it can continue to train the workforce Wisconsin employers desperately need.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator