

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
U.S. Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel,

As you consider proposals for the Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation (DMDI) Institute, we write to express our strong support for the Digital Lab for Manufacturing (“Digital Lab”), a proposal led by UI LABS, an independent, nonprofit organization in Chicago—the world’s fifth-largest economy with a powerful manufacturing and supply chain base.

The Digital Lab is a remarkable collaboration of industry, university, and public sector partners that will lead the next industrial revolution. It will create jobs, grow the economy, and dramatically increase the competitiveness of American companies such that the future of manufacturing is made in America. Leveraging the Midwest’s unique capabilities, partnerships, and workforce, the Digital Lab will develop innovative solutions that transform both defense and civilian industries with hundreds of billions in annual savings. Integration through “digital DNA” will dramatically reduce the time and cost it takes to design, source, and manufacture spare parts for legacy equipment. It will also expand markets and the base of suppliers and drive innovation in goods and services by companies large and small.

Digital Lab’s partners comprise a vast swathe of the greater industrial Midwest, including partners in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, and Wisconsin. Industry partners like General Electric, Rolls Royce, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Caterpillar, Rockwell Collins, and Procter & Gamble offer unparalleled depth, breadth, and experience in manufacturing in both defense and civilian industries. The Digital Lab team owns and operates the world’s most powerful academic supercomputer with the fastest fiber in the country to unleash its power. The team boasts seven of the top 20 engineering schools in the country. Along with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern University, other Illinois universities include the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. This entire effort has robust financial support from our partner states, as well as the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, and the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition. Together, these companies, universities, and entities will more than match the federal investment of \$70 million.

With this combined experience and financial commitment, Digital Lab holds great promise for transformational returns on the federal government’s research and development investment. It will meet the needs of both the military and private industry. By increasing transparency and lowering barriers, digital manufacturing technologies will create new opportunities for small manufacturers and create high-wage, high-skilled jobs for American workers. The Digital Lab’s contribution to a new era of manufacturing is critical to our nation’s military readiness and future economic prosperity.

For these reasons, we ask that you give the Digital Lab concept paper full consideration and encourage you to provide UI LABS the opportunity to submit a full proposal.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



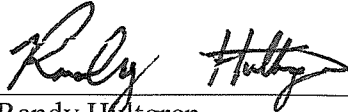
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



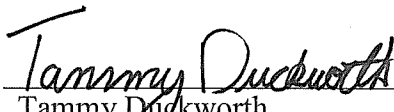
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Member of Congress



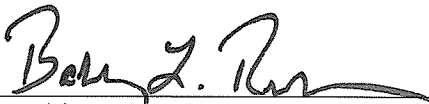
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Member of Congress



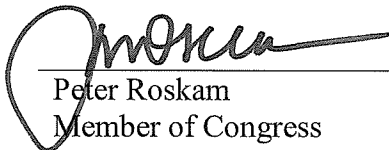
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Member of Congress



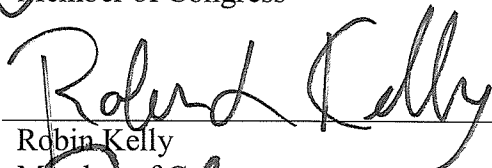
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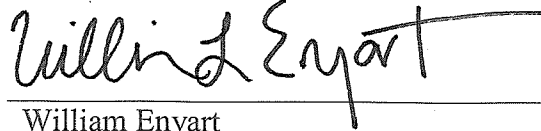
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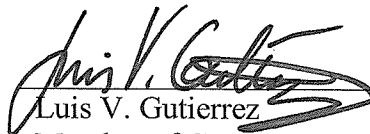
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