

# United States Senate

July 14, 2021

Suzan G. LeVine  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Ms. LeVine:

Thank you for your response to my May 21, 2021 letter regarding the opening of Job Corps. I am requesting a review of the one-size fits all guidance restricting in-person enrollment.

While I appreciate and agree with the program monitoring guidance from the CDC and state and local health officials, it seems there remains a serious disconnect between locations in Montana and Washington, DC. The State of Montana has fully reopened businesses without restriction and lifted its mask mandate. Last week, I met with a local elected official in Anaconda who oversees the local health department who expressed strong support for in-person enrollment and confidence in safety protocols already in place. Every similar residential and education facility in the county resumed in-person instruction some time ago. In fact, residential education facilities in Montana from universities to summer camps have resumed in-person programming, while following federal, state, and local guidelines. Much like our Civilian Conservation Corps Centers, these programs attract participants from around the country and have adapted successfully to life in the COVID-19 era.

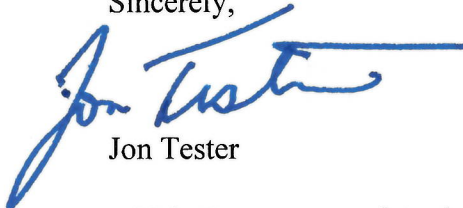
I have confidence in the professional staff at both of Montana's CCC centers to implement protocols to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their communities. That is, if they are empowered to process in-person enrollment in light of appropriate health guidance and follow quarantine protocols already in place. Although virtual enrollment may be viewed as a positive step, one site has not been approved to even go to those lengths despite submitting a plan to proceed months ago. The process as described by the website your response indicates a 60-day virtual enrollment, followed by in-person attendance. There is a clear acknowledgement virtual enrollment is not suitable for all students and some skills cannot be taught online. Neither your letter nor the website indicate a difference in safety or procedure related to COVID-19 between arriving on campus on day 1 or 61.

I am again requesting review of current guidance to allow for case-by-case resumption of in-person enrollment and participation in Montana's Civilian Conservation Corps centers without further delay. The Forest Service operates the day to day operations of these centers and has successfully managed close-quarters operations such as fire camps throughout the pandemic. As such, the agency is well equipped to properly oversee important in-person functions like the Anaconda and Trapper Creek CCCs in a safe and effective manner. I am ready to work with you

to consider all options to restore full operations of these critical facilities, including much needed in-person enrollment to serve at-risk youth.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Tester

CC: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture

CC: The Honorable Martin J. Walsh, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor