

June 15, 2023

Dear Lawmakers:

On behalf of InnovatePGH and the Pittsburgh Innovation District, I am writing to share our support for the University of Pittsburgh and its crucial role in our community as a top employer and economic driver. Pennsylvania's innovation economy is stronger because of the University of Pittsburgh. As one of the nation's premier public research institutions and a longstanding community anchor, Pitt is a tremendous asset driving opportunity, attracting outside companies, building connections, drawing talent, and bringing millions in external funding into the commonwealth.

It's no secret the commonwealth is facing severe worker shortages in key sectors. Accordingly, attracting and retaining talent and diversifying our economy remains a priority for the success of our region's job creators. In addition to the essential role the University plays through its 196,000-strong alumni network across the commonwealth and by educating 28,000 students each year - 65% of who call Pennsylvania home – Pitt also plays a significant role in supporting existing and building new workforce development programs. This includes championing our partnership through the Innovation District Skills Alliance, connecting residents of marginalized Pittsburgh neighborhoods to jobs and opportunities at the University.

As an anchor research and development asset for the region, the University continues its longstanding track record of diversifying and future-proofing our economy by adjusting curriculum based on industry feedback, nurturing innovation, and moving ideas to market, launching nearly 100 startups over the last five years. Investments such as establishing the LifeX accelerator to commercialize new technologies and unlocking explosive life sciences sector growth through the recently-announced Pitt BioForge – including a much-needed biomanufacturing institute – demonstrate Pitt's essential role in driving Pennsylvania's economy.

The University of Pittsburgh and its students are an indispensable engine of opportunity for our region and a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's rise as a global innovation center. We are proud of Pitt's role in our community and grateful to have such a powerful ally in advancing the critical work of strengthening Pennsylvania's families, economies, and future.

Respectfully,



Sean C. Luther
President + CEO