

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense-The Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Room E1010
3010 Defense- The Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-3010

Dear Secretary Carter and Under Secretary Kendall,

The Georgia congressional delegation is writing in support of the Advanced Functional Fabrics of America (AFFOA)-led team, of which the University of Georgia is a member, for the Revolutionary Fibers & Textiles Manufacturing Innovation Institute (RFT-MII) proposal solicited by the U.S. Department of Defense.

The AFFOA proposal aims to accelerate the commercialization of technology breakthroughs, including fiber devices that will enable fabrics and wearables to deliver functionality far beyond conventional fabrics. The AFFOA public-private partnership will enable new opportunities in functional fabric manufacturing that will have a profound impact on our competitiveness in the fiber and textile industries globally.

Additionally, AFFOA will build a National Fabric Innovation Network to integrate a nationwide system that includes Georgia's expertise in design, manufacturing, and deployment of fibers and textile products. Its headquarters in close proximity to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will leverage the innovation ecosystem of the greater Boston area as well as those in the states of our AFFOA partner institutions in California, Florida, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, and Georgia.

Leveraging its significant assets – ranging from financial support, research capabilities, private sector partnerships, incubation and business incentives, and the nation's premier workforce training programs – Georgia is well-positioned to participate in this strategically important initiative. Among these assets is the University of Georgia – our state's flagship higher education institution – which serves as a robust economic driver for our state and holds notable expertise in material sciences, including fibers and textiles, nanotechnology, and engineering. UGA's resources also include the Innovation Gateway, one of the most highly ranked academic technology commercialization and new business startup operations in the country. Additionally, UGA's Public Service and Outreach units impact all of Georgia's 159 counties, including through its leadership of the statewide Small Business Development Center support system. AFFOA will benefit greatly from these critical assets.

Our state is the fourth fastest growing state in the United States and has an advanced manufacturing talent base that ranks among the top fifteen states for concentration of engineering, computer, electronic and R&D-intensive occupations. The state's advanced industries in fibers and polymers, architectural and interior flooring, medical textiles, apparel, and transportation produce integrated goods that are traded worldwide. Georgia's highway system, state-of-the-art ports, extensive rail system, and premier international airport keep Georgia-made products flowing to customers. Furthermore, Georgia boasts the world-renowned Quickstart program, a workforce training partnership between the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Technical College System of Georgia that provides customized training to qualified Georgia businesses, as well as Operation Workforce, which seeks to match veterans with civilian employment opportunities based on their unique skillsets. These programs accelerate the development of a skilled workforce able to deliver new products and technologies to market in a way that very few economies anywhere in the world can match.

In addition, the Georgia congressional delegation wholeheartedly supports our state's commitment to serving as a cost-sharing partner of the RFT-MII. The state's commitment to AFFOA's proposal is demonstrated by up to \$1 million per year in cost sharing for five years, and Georgia's premier workforce development initiatives and highly competitive business incentives for start-up and relocating firms will add significant value beyond the \$1 million per year commitment. Given Georgia's existing market-oriented policies, infrastructure, and dynamic economy, we are confident that this innovation institute will remain sustainable well into the future.

Georgia offers a potent mix of resources that uniquely position it to support the development of innovative fiber functionality and manufacturing. The AFFOA RFT-MII offers Georgia the opportunity to leverage its skilled, creative workforce, spirit of entrepreneurship, and flagship higher education institution in service to our nation. Respectfully, we ask your favorable consideration of the Advanced Functional Fabrics of America-led team for the Revolutionary Fibers & Textiles Manufacturing Innovation Institute proposal.

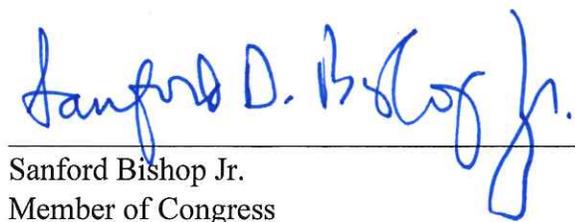
Sincerely,



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



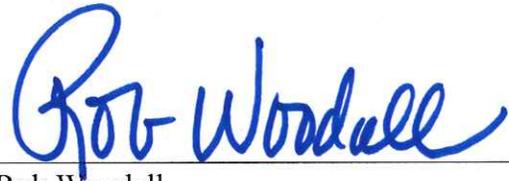
Sanford Bishop Jr.
Member of Congress



Lynn Westmoreland
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Member of Congress



Rob Woodall
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



Doug Collins
Member of Congress



Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



Rick Allen
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Tom Graves
Member of Congress