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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas

52nd District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

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March 27, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the Applied Automation, Innovation, & Robotics (AAIR) Center – Instructional Equipment project in fiscal year 2027, in the amount of \$3,500,000. The entity to receive the funding is the San Diego Community College District, located at 3375 Camino Del Rio South San Diego, CA 92108.

This project would fund the purchase and installation of critical equipment for the San Diego College of Continuing Education's new AAIR Center—a state-of-the-art workforce training hub dedicated to preparing residents for high-demand careers in industrial automation, robotics, advanced manufacturing, and industrial maintenance. The funds will be used to purchase and install critical equipment needed to provide students with modern laboratory environments designed specifically for advanced manufacturing and automation training. Equipment needed for the center includes industrial automation and smart manufacturing systems such as programmable logic controllers, motor control trainers, sensors, integrated control panels, and digital manufacturing systems; industrial robotics platforms, collaborative robots (cobots), vision systems, and robotic training cells; industrial maintenance training systems including hydraulics, pneumatics, and electromechanical troubleshooting equipment; safety infrastructure and equipment integration required to support hands-on training.

This project is a good use of federal funds because it will help address documented workforce shortages in high-demand technical occupations in the region. San Diego employers across aerospace, defense, and advanced manufacturing sectors report persistent shortages of skilled workers trained in automation, robotics, and industrial maintenance technologies. By providing tuition-free, industry-aligned training programs, the AAIR Center will provide accessible entry points into middle-skill careers that offer strong wages and long-term career advancement. In doing so, the center will expand access to career pathways for adult learners, displaced workers, veterans, and individuals from historically underserved communities.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S.C. §§ 5305(a)(2) & (4).

This project has broad support from a large network of partners and stakeholders, including the San Diego & Imperial Counties Community Colleges Regional Consortium.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Thank you for your consideration of funding for these programs. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Senior Legislative Assistant, Michael Rivas, at michael.rivas@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "V".

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress