

**BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.**

36TH DISTRICT, TEXAS  
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March 13, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, the Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1036 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) Workforce Development Training Center (Silsbee, Texas) in Fiscal Year 2027. The entity receiving funding for this project is Lamar Institute of Technology (in partnership with Silsbee Independent School District), located at Frank Robinson Center, 1355 W Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Silsbee, TX 77656. The funding would be used to expand workforce development capacity through targeted education and training in rural Silsbee, Texas (population approximately 7,000).

The project will construct, renovate, and equip a dedicated instructional and workforce training center operated by Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT), the only public technical college serving Southeast Texas. LIT and Silsbee Independent School District already maintain a strong collaboration at the Frank Robinson Center on the Silsbee ISD campus, providing a shared educational space that links secondary education, postsecondary training, and local workforce needs. This project will create additional instructional spaces to deliver more workforce development certificates and immediate career pathways, addressing critical skills gaps and supporting economic growth in the rural community.

Residents in rural Silsbee face limited access to technical training facilities, often traveling outside the region to obtain workforce credentials and industry certifications. These barriers disproportionately affect students and working adults who face challenges with transportation, childcare, broadband access, and scheduling. Expanding LIT's capacity and educational offerings at the Frank Robinson Center will reduce these barriers and provide local access to high-demand career and technical education.

The project builds on a strong existing education pipeline between LIT and local school districts, particularly through dual credit partnerships with Silsbee and Kountze ISDs. More than 450 high

school students enroll in LIT dual credit courses annually, demonstrating strong demand for career-focused education. This partnership allows students to transition seamlessly from dual credit programs into postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, and workforce credentials without leaving their community, supporting educational attainment and workforce participation.

The Silsbee site will expand training capacity in high-demand sectors, including utility line technology, automotive technology, and skilled trades. LIT's Utility Line Technology program, with long-standing partnerships with electric cooperatives and utility providers across Southeast Texas, addresses a critical workforce need driven by infrastructure modernization, retirements, and grid resiliency. The site will increase enrollment capacity, modernize hands-on training environments, and expand instruction in electrical systems, heavy equipment operation, and utility safety.

Additionally, the facility will serve as a workforce and continuing education hub, offering short-term training in welding, automotive technology, plumbing, electrical systems, industrial machinery, generator and power systems, and heavy equipment operation. These programs will support both new workforce entrants and incumbent workers seeking to up-skill or re-skill, helping local employers maintain a skilled workforce.

By expanding access to technical training in a rural community and strengthening education-industry partnerships, this project will help address labor shortages, increase economic mobility, and support long-term workforce development in Southeast Texas. The collaboration between Lamar Institute of Technology and Silsbee Independent School District represents a strategic investment in workforce infrastructure that will benefit students, employers, and the broader community for years to come.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it directly addresses critical workforce needs in rural Silsbee, a community with limited access to technical education and training. By expanding Lamar Institute of Technology's instructional capacity through a dedicated workforce training center, residents, particularly students and working adults, will gain local access to high-demand career and technical education, reducing barriers such as travel, childcare, and scheduling constraints. This investment strengthens an existing, proven partnership between LIT and Silsbee Independent School District, which currently serves 370 high school students through dual credit programs and creates a seamless pathway into postsecondary certificates and workforce credentials.

The project benefits the public by preparing residents for careers in sectors vital to the regional economy, including utility line technology, automotive technology, skilled trades, and industrial services. Expanding local training opportunities will help address labor shortages, increase economic mobility, and provide employers with a skilled workforce capable of supporting infrastructure modernization and business growth. This is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars because it leverages an established education pipeline, addresses urgent workforce gaps, and delivers measurable outcomes, such as increased credential attainment, local employment, and sustainable economic development, ensuring that federal investment translates directly into long-term community and regional benefits.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S. Code section 1926(a). I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Babin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress