



November 17, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chaves-DeRemer  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Linda McMahon  
Secretary  
Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer, Secretary Lutnick, and Secretary McMahon:

On behalf of international automakers who build nearly half of all the cars and trucks made in America each year, we appreciate your efforts to expand apprenticeships and workforce opportunities for hardworking Americans and applaud the recent release of your departments' report -- "[America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age.](#)" Our members' workforce programs align closely with the strategy outlined in the report, and we hope to serve as a partner in your efforts to create new and exciting opportunities for hardworking Americans.

Autos Drive America represents international automakers that have made America their home. Autos Drive America members include American Honda Motor Co., Inc., BMW of North America, Hyundai Motor America, Kia Motors America, Inc., Mazda North American Operations, Inc., Mercedes-Benz USA, Mitsubishi Motors, Nissan North America, Inc., Subaru of America, Inc., Toyota Motor North America, Inc., Volkswagen Group of America, Volvo Cars USA, and Panasonic.

International automakers have invested over \$100 billion in U.S. operations, supporting two million American jobs and building deep roots in communities nationwide. Our members are leading long-term solutions, partnering with schools, funding workforce development centers, and expanding apprenticeship programs that prepare the next generation of American workers, and we are committed to working with your administration to implement strategies that strengthen talent pipelines and support sustained U.S. manufacturing growth.

### **Partnering with Schools and Colleges:**

Critically, the administration's talent strategy focuses on aligning education with workforce needs. For years, international automakers have been partnering with local schools and community colleges to equip the next generation of American workers with the skills they need for long, rewarding careers.

BMW . Honda . Hyundai . Kia . Mazda . Mercedes-Benz . Mitsubishi . Nissan . Subaru . Toyota . Volkswagen . Volvo



Autos Drive America members are deeply committed to strengthening the U.S. automotive workforce, not only through programs that support their manufacturing facilities, but also by working alongside local dealerships across the country to expand technician training initiatives. These programs equip aspiring and current technicians with the skills needed to service and maintain modern vehicles, ensuring a pipeline of talent that supports both industry growth and consumer needs. As passenger vehicle technology continues to advance with the integration of new safety systems, connectivity, and electrification, the demand for highly skilled and educated technicians is greater than ever. By investing in workforce development from the factory floor to service centers, international automakers are helping prepare technicians nationwide to succeed in a rapidly evolving industry.

In many states, our partnerships have become models for how industry and education can work together to deliver results and have benefited dozens of local economies. Below are some key examples of how Autos Drive America members have collaborated with schools and colleges to prepare students for critical careers:

- Toyota's "Driving Possibilities" has invested \$110 million in STEM K-12 programming across several states to prepare students for careers in STEM fields.
- Subaru has partnered with 510 secondary and post-secondary schools to build a vehicle technician talent pipeline through Subaru University.
- In partnership with Hamilton County Schools and Chattanooga State Community College, the Volkswagen Academy in Chattanooga, Tennessee offers the Mechatronics Academy at Volkswagen (MAV) for rising high school juniors and seniors. Additionally, the Volkswagen Academy Summer Camp provides two distinct pathways for 14- to 18-year-old campers – Automation or Automotive – that introduce students to state-of-the-art technologies. The company also supports the Volkswagen eLab program for K-12 students, which empower students to engage with emergent technologies such as automated manufacturing equipment, robotics, microcomputers, and digital design tools. These labs are now located at 55 schools in Hamilton County, Tennessee, which makes the area the world leader in certified digital fabrication labs.
- Honda's commitment and relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities has impacted over 300,000 students and provided more than \$14 million in grants supporting HBCU education programs and facility improvements.
- BMW Manufacturing donated \$300,000 to fund the dynamic programs of Project Lead the Way for a three-year period at four Cherokee County middle schools: Gaffney, Blacksburg, Granard, and John E. Ewing. Project Lead the Way is a national non-profit that offers STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) learning experiences for K-12 students and teachers that include hands-on activities, projects, and complex problem solving. BMW participates in educational initiatives, such as the state's Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities and Governor's School for Science and Math. South Carolina's technical colleges and universities also receive BMW support to fund fellowships.
- Nissan's Centers of Excellence in Tennessee collaborate with local schools to offer a curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge in courses such as advanced manufacturing and mechatronics and allows students to earn industry-recognized credentials.



- Volvo's Accelerator Program allows high school seniors to receive an introduction to manufacturing and acquire skills needed to become full-time team members at their plant in Ridgeville, South Carolina.
- Hyundai Initiative for Robotics Excellence has worked to establish robotics teams at local schools in Alabama to seed the next generation of a technically proficient workforce.
- Kia has partnered with SAE International to promote STEM learning to kids in over 60 schools in Kia communities in Georgia and Alabama.
- Mazda's supported science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education initiative provides hands-on, challenge-based learning for grades 5–12, equipping underserved schools with materials, 3D printers, training, and ongoing support to foster problem-solving and innovation.
- Mercedes-Benz established a national partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor to train Job Corps students aged 16-24 for auto industry careers.

These examples reflect the broader, long-term commitments, investments, and planning that international automakers have undertaken to expand workforce opportunities, prepare our future workforce, and provide them with the skills and education they need for a successful career.

### **Expanding Opportunities and the Role of Industry-Driven Models:**

Autos Drive America appreciates the administration's support for developing industry-approved standards, its recognition of the need to strengthen the current registered apprenticeship system, and its emphasis on enhancing the value of registered apprenticeships for employers. International automakers operate dozens of workforce programs, including apprenticeship programs that provide workers with the skills needed for successful careers in manufacturing. Notably, Toyota's Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) program is an employer-led workforce development model designed to build a pipeline of globally competitive, highly skilled manufacturing and vehicle technicians.

Founded by Toyota in 2010 and now managed nationally by the Manufacturing Institute at the National Association of Manufacturers, FAME partners with community colleges to deliver a rigorous, five-semester program that blends classroom learning with hands-on experience, alternating two days in class with three days at work. The curriculum focuses on technical skills, professional behaviors, and manufacturing best practices, with training conducted in advanced, factory-like settings. Since its launch, FAME has expanded to 16 states, over 45 colleges, and more than 450 company partners.

The BMW Scholars Program is a two-year apprenticeship program that partners with local area technical colleges in South Carolina, allowing full-time students to earn and learn through part-time roles at BMW Manufacturing Co. in Spartanburg and providing full-time employment to graduates. BMW expanded the popular Scholars program to include the BMW Rising Scholars for high school seniors and, in November 2024, launched the Veterans Acceleration Program (VAP). Upon completion of the program, students are offered a full-time position at BMW Plant Spartanburg.



Additionally, the Volkswagen Academy operates dual two-year apprenticeship programs, Automotive Systems Technology and Robotronics, in partnership with Chattanooga State Community College. The apprentices, who earn hourly pay after the first two semesters, learn to analyze, diagnose, and manage electric vehicle or robotics systems. Both programs culminate in an associate's degree as well as a conditional job offer upon completion of the apprenticeship program.

Many of our members also utilize the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) programs and ASE Education Program Accreditation for their dealer technician skills development and education. Based on industry-developed standards, ASE offers strong quality assurance and measurable accountability for career and technical education programs, and ASE Certifications are a well-recognized credential with clear value for both technicians and the businesses that employ them.

These programs, and many others operated by international automakers, have shown wide success, portability across the industry, and have allowed thousands of hardworking Americans to advance their careers. Autos Drive America would welcome any opportunities to work with your agencies to expand these proven, employer-driven models to meet workforce demands and strengthen America's manufacturing competitiveness.

#### **Working Together to Support U.S. Auto Industry and Workforce:**

As the administration continues to plan to meet the workforce needs of U.S. companies, streamline and integrate development systems for greater efficiency, improve accountability in training programs, upskill current workers, and expand alternatives to traditional four-year degrees, Autos Drive America stands ready to work together to connect America's workers with high-wage careers and strengthen talent pipelines for the U.S. auto industry.

Autos Drive America would also like to extend an invitation to visit our U.S. facilities and see firsthand the critical workforce programs operated by our members. We welcome the opportunity to host you or your staff and provide additional insight into how these programs support workers and strengthen communities across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer M. Safavian".

Jennifer M. Safavian  
President and CEO