

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

June 23, 2010

Les Engel
President
Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association
P.O. Box 150
Elbow Lake, MN 56531

Dear members of the Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association,

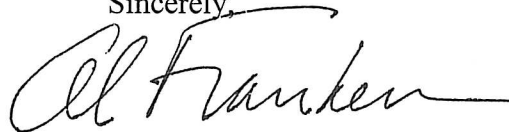
Thank you for inviting me to join you today and I am sorry I cannot be with you today at your Legislative Forum. However, I send my best wishes from Washington, DC.

I serve on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and so I see one of my jobs as making sure America stays competitive in the global economy. I believe our state's manufacturers have a strong tradition of building quality into their products, with superior service in delivering the best possible product.

I also know that a lot of you invest a significant amount in the training of your workers and I am concerned about the impending worker shortage in manufacturing. We have to start teaching the next generation of workers that manufacturing is alive and well, and that these are high-skill and hands-on jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. That is why I support funding for St. Cloud State University's Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) discovery mobile lab, which will teach high school students around Central Minnesota the foundational skills they need. With the unemployment rate as high as it is, it is tragic that we have well-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector that need to be filled and workers who desperately need the jobs, but lack the training to fill them.

I look forward to working with you in the coming years to ensure manufacturing continues to be a vital part of our state economy.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator