

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 26, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In light of the stunning number of mass layoffs in the month of January, we are writing to join the growing numbers of people calling for you to keep the commitment you made five months ago to appoint an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing. About 2,400 employers nationwide laid off 50 or more workers in the last month, giving January the third-highest number of so-called mass layoffs since the government began tracking the statistic a decade ago.

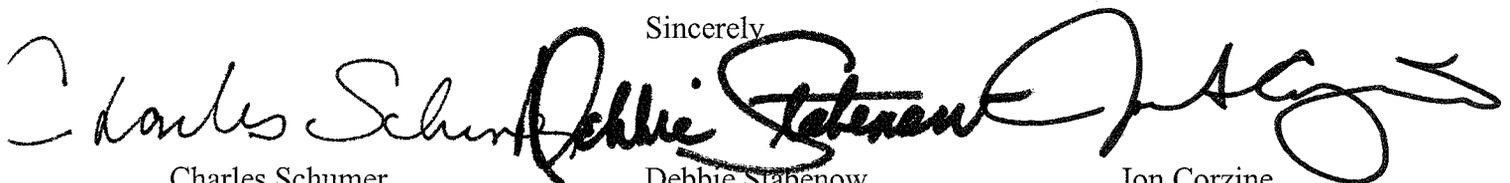
This Administration has repeatedly stated that the economy is on its way to recovery, pointing to statistics such as high consumer confidence and ignoring the record number of job losses under its watch. Yesterday, the Conference Board announced that consumer confidence has dropped significantly to 87.3 in February from 96.8. The new reading is the lowest confidence number since October. Clearly the economy is not recovering as well as you would have us believe.

This past Labor Day, you announced with great fanfare that you would be appointing a so-called Manufacturing Czar at the Department of Commerce. Since then, 225,000 jobs in manufacturing have been lost nationwide. Today, as thousands of Americans continue to lose their jobs, that Manufacturing Czar position remains unfilled. While you have been sitting on your hands, the job losses are mounting. In New York, for example more than 7,000 workers in New York alone have lost their manufacturing jobs since September. The State of Michigan has lost 18% of its manufacturing jobs in the last three years. And today, the Ford Motor Company plant in Edison, NJ will be shutting down for good leaving New Jersey's auto industry, which once employed more than 14,000 workers with just over 1,000 jobs. Inaction is unacceptable.

Talking about the manufacturing job losses on Labor Day, you said, "We have a responsibility that when somebody hurts, government has got to move." Thousands of manufacturing workers have lost their jobs since then. So we ask you, when will your government move?

The millions of American manufacturing workers deserve more than just a splashy proclamation on Labor Day. They deserve an aggressive plan to save their jobs and improve the economy. We would appreciate a response as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Charles Schumer
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Jon Corzine
United States Senator