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March 5, 2008

The Honorable Michael R. McNulty
House of Representatives
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building
Room 827
Albany, NY 12207

RE: Challenger Learning Center for Tech Valley

Dear Congressman McNulty:

Please accept this letter of support for the Challenger Learning Center for Tech Valley and their grant request for \$500,000 for capital purchase of simulators and renovation costs of leased space.

The Challenger Learning Center for Tech Valley will be a new, state-of-the-art facility to be located in the Schenectady Museum of Science and Technology. The project is designed to attract 5th to 8th graders from 19 counties in New York to science, technology and math by enticing them with simulated voyages to the Moon and Mars – while actually working at the mock Space Station or Mission Control. The core of the Challenger Learning Center's programs is using NYS Department of Education-approved science and math curriculum, problem-solving and teamwork. Challenger will serve as a field lab where students will apply key lessons from their classroom at the Challenger Learning Center.

Teachers from Kingston to the Canadian border view the Challenger as exciting and worthy, in addition to not having to teach anything extra, fulfilling another mandate, or teaching to a test. And, the project will be self-sustaining through fees and grants once the initial capital investment has been made. Current leadership support and contributions are from individuals, families, businesses, technology and nanotechnology companies, the microelectronics industry, entrepreneurs, government, foundations, and civic organizations.

In an even-broader role, the Challenger Learning Center will act as a catalyst for career pathways in science, math and engineering to help develop the future workforce of New York State's Tech Valley.

I hope you share and foster my belief that Challenger learning Center for Tech Valley will richly enhance our students' learning and provide this region a valuable tool in the expansion of science, technology and math education opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil D. Breslin".

Neil D. Breslin
Member of Senate

NDB:bsr