

# TOWN OF DOUGLAS

Timothy P. Bonin, *Chairman*  
Michael D. Hughes, *Vice Chair*  
Mitchell S. Cohen  
Harold R. Davis  
Jeffrey D. LaPorte

## OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN

29 Depot Street • Douglas, MA 01516

508-476-4000

Fax: 508-476-4012

TTY 508-476-1619

Michael J. Guzinski  
Town Administrator

Suzanne L. Kane  
Administrative Assistant

September 20, 2011

The Hon. Richard E. Neal  
2208 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

### *Re: Quinsigamond Community College Satellite Campus in the Blackstone Valley*

Dear Congressman Neal:

The need and value of a community college in the Blackstone Valley is palpable. It is why we are writing to you today.

As you know, Quinsigamond Community College's (QCC) main campus in Worcester is severely overcrowded. The college has reached its threshold for expansion and the only way to provide the residents of the Blackstone Valley with affordable higher education opportunities is to endorse and support a satellite campus in the region. We are asking that you do just that.

The idea of a community college in the Blackstone Valley is not a new one and has been discussed for nearly 25 years. But, as you know, a major hindrance to the creation of a satellite campus in this region was the inability to find a suitable, sensible location for QCC.

We believe we have the perfect location to meet the needs of our area's community college and, as important, the residents of the Blackstone Valley.

Like you, we found the recent announcement of Classic Envelope's plans to relocate from its existing Northbridge location in order to expand its business and create more jobs in the region welcomed news.

After an exhaustive search of facilities in the region, Classic Envelope has announced plans to pursue the textile mill located directly off of Rte. 146 in our town as its new home.

Classic Envelope's plans are to use the first floor of the facility for their business operations, leaving other assets of the location, including the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, as a viable location for another viable and flourishing QCC satellite campus.

One only has to look at QCC's recent expansion into Southbridge as an example of the importance and need for affordable higher education. We have no reason to believe that a campus in the Valley would not be just as successful, if not more successful than that satellite facility. You played a critical role in Southbridge's satellite office and we are hoping you can do the same here.

There are no higher education institutions in this rapidly growing part of the Commonwealth.

The need to address the lack of a higher education presence in the region has taken on a new importance as QCC will soon be forced to move its automotive repair classes off of the Blackstone Valley Technical campus. Valley Tech needs the space to address their own expansion needs. The contract between the two will end in June of 2012 and will force QCC to move its program to Worcester.

The Town of Douglas is an equal opportunity provider, and employer.

The mill already has automotive bays available. They will need renovations to meet various codes and governmental demands, but the facility would be a great fit.

Taken further, expansion into the Blackstone Valley along the Rte. 146 corridor would strengthen an existing partnership with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). Under this partnership, if a student is enrolled in one school and needs a course the other school teaches they may attend that course with no additional fee incurred to the student. Such a partnership greatly strengthens both schools.

Our biggest challenge towards bringing a satellite campus to the region is funding. We are, however, cognizant of President Barack Obama's recent proposal to pump \$5 billion into facilities and the modernization of the nation's community colleges. We agree with him that such educational opportunities are paramount for displaced workers and high school graduates looking to further their skills and qualifications.

We believe in the opportunities that higher education provides the individual. The establishment of a college campus would provide the opportunity for much needed classes to retrain those who have been forced to change their careers due to job elimination. We'd like to work closely with you in getting the residents of the Blackstone Valley back to work and thereby increase the economic vitality of the region.

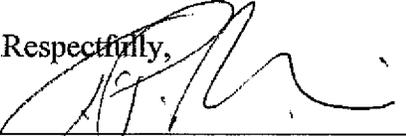
We concur with QCC's leadership and local business leaders that this location would be a perfect fit for QCC and, as important, the residents of our region.

We ask that you, as our congressman, work with us and countless others to bring QCC into the Valley. The time is right and the need has never been greater.

We want to work with you and other state leaders to make this idea a reality and appreciate your strong and supportive consideration of this exciting advancement in the region. We respectfully request that you and/or your staff contact our office so that we can work together to bring this vision to reality.

We would like to thank you in advance for all of your assistance in this very important matter.

Respectfully,



---

Timothy P. Bonin, *Chairman*



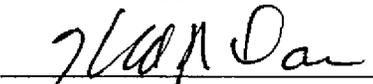
---

Michael D. Hughes, *Vice Chair*



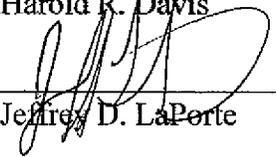
---

Mitchell S. Cohen



---

Harold R. Davis



---

Jeffrey D. LaPorte