

Dear Senator Harp,

My name is Christopher J. Ricard and I am a sophomore in the Ellis Clark Regional agriscience program in Woodbury.

I live in Woodbury and I attend this regional agriscience school choice Program because of the incredible experience and knowledge provided by attending the Agriscience Program here in Woodbury. Here I am able to learn about topics such as Mechanics or Ag-Production which provide not only basic life skills but as well as proficiencies which I can carry on later in life for the better opportunity at getting a career in agriculture. I am currently on a CDE team for meats judging. This year we won states and we are going to nationals and hopefully bringing home the gold. I also get a great experience from my SAE or job that everyone in the program needs. I have well over three hundred hours this year and am very proud of what I have learned. These skills I have learned over the summer make a difference when applying for a job later on. I am very certain that the skills that kids involved in this program learn improves the quality of life for their future. I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.** Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with details) This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Ricard