

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3808**

March 24, 2025

President Neeli Bendapudi  
The Pennsylvania State University  
201 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802

Dear President Bendapudi,

As the Congressional Representative for Pennsylvania's Eighth District, I am writing to you in response to your February 25, 2025, memoranda regarding the plan for potential closures of regional Pennsylvania State University (PSU) campuses across the Commonwealth. Included in the list of potential closures are three campuses in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA). These include the Scranton campus, located in my district, as well as the Hazleton and Wilkes-Barre campuses, which are located right outside my district and utilized by a sizable number of my constituents.

Although I was encouraged by the recent guidance for PSU to retain a continued presence in NEPA, I remain concerned about the negative effects any sort of consolidation will have on our region. I want to make clear the deep concern and growing anxiety I have heard from my constituents that rely on these campuses for both education and employment, and highlight the detrimental impacts the closure of any of these campuses will have on higher education access and economic growth in our NEPA communities. I am most concerned about how closures could impact the quality and scope of PSU programs available to our local students and the potential job losses among local PSU faculty and staff.

Since 1855, PSU has a storied history of educating generations of students of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. What began as a university for agricultural studies has evolved into one of the nation's top schools for engineering, medicine, and technology.<sup>1</sup> Today's alumni number more than 775,000, and they carry the knowledge and skills taught by PSU across our country and the world.<sup>2</sup> I am proud that the NEPA campuses currently educate more than 1,700 students who will soon join this alumni network.

Since your tenure began in 2022, you have been an enthusiastic champion for PSU, and rightly declare to everyone you encounter that PSU belongs to all Pennsylvanians. I couldn't agree with this more, especially as it strives to provide high quality and affordable education. This is the key to the development of future generations as they become the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> century workforce

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psu.edu/news/engineering/story/penn-state-engineering-rises-us-news-world-report-graduate-rankings>

<sup>2</sup> <https://mfin.smeal.psu.edu/student-life/alumni-network>

America will rely on. This includes my constituents in NEPA, PSU, and the possibilities it promises, belong to them as well.

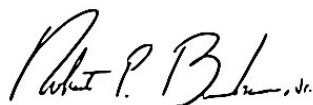
As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I have a deep appreciation of our land-grant university system, and I support federal investments that enable these institutions to fulfill their mission to expand education access and drive economic opportunities. Since 2008, PSU has received more than \$12 billion in various Federal grants (often supported by members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation) to support key research and mission initiatives.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved \$242.1 million for PSU's annual budget last year.<sup>4</sup> NEPA taxpayers and businesses helped to finance these grants and funding, and their contributions to the success of PSU as a whole and its regional campus should not be ignored.

NEPA is a region that has experienced economic distress in recent decades; however, it is now primed to unlock the economic potential of emerging industries and new opportunities for growth, job creation, and investments that will revitalize local communities. NEPA has grown as a warehousing and logistics hub, and opportunities for energy and AI development exist that will help power a national manufacturing renaissance. The region is working diligently to secure approval and funding for restored passenger rail service between Scranton and New York City, opening new opportunities to grow the knowledge economy.

These opportunities will require continued and increased investment in current and future generations. Attempts at decreasing access to the services that are provided at our local PSU campuses only threaten to hinder our economic revitalization. Therefore, I am calling on you and the select group responsible for closure recommendations to step up to this moment and work with our local community leaders to keep these regional campuses fully open, preserving full access to the PSU student experience for our local students. This decade is NEPA's opportunity to put itself back on the map as an economic and knowledge leader for our Commonwealth and our country. I hope PSU's NEPA campuses will be a part of that story.

In closing, before a final recommendation and decision is made, I would welcome and greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in NEPA to personally discuss these potential impacts and ensure PSU has a firsthand understanding of the exciting potential that our region has to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob P. Bresnahan, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rob Bresnahan, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=be690d7be684dd6545609550c2d238b5>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.psu.edu/news/administration/story/general-assembly-approves-penn-states-2024-25-state-funding>