

Melanie Willoughby
Chief Government Affairs
Officer

TO: Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee

Frank Robinson
Vice President of
Grassroots & Government
Affairs

FR: Tyler Seville, Director of Technology & Workforce Development

DATE: September 29, 2016

Mary Beaumont
Vice President of
Health & Legal Affairs

RE: *Support for A-1668 (Schaer, Jasey)/ S-354 (Cunningham, Kean)*

Sara Bluhm
Vice President of
Environment & Energy

On behalf of our 20,000 member companies, the New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJ BIA) would like to express our **SUPPORT** for Assembly Bill 1668 (Schaer, Jasey) and Senate Bill 354 (Kean) which establishes the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Business Partnerships to foster innovation in New Jersey.

Andrew Musick
Director of Taxation &
Economic Development

Collaboration between business, higher education and state government is critical for our state to maintain its global edge and vital for a robust high tech economy. New Jersey has all the pieces to have a world-class innovation hub: strong research based industries, outstanding academic institutions, a supportive state government, dynamic entrepreneurs, accessibility to capital and a highly-educated workforce. The challenge has been in taking these assets and ensuring that they are working together to create an effective and competitive innovation ecosystem.

Nicol Nicola
Director of
Economic Research

The Commission would bring together leaders in academia, business and state government to identify and stimulate collaborations to advance technology based economic development. By focusing on the life sciences, information technology and telecommunications industries, our state will support our high-tech sectors and continue our leadership in research and development.

Tyler Seville
Director of Technology &
Workforce Development

Likewise, the Commission will strengthen the bonds between academia and business as it relates to employment and workforce development to maintain our innovation ecosystem. While New Jersey boasts more scientists and engineers per square mile than any other state, focusing on our STEM sectors will help our students find employment in high growth industries with the skills and experience they need for the world of work.

Michael Wallace
Director of
Employment, Labor &
Federal Affairs

New Jersey has made dramatic progress over the past five years in coordinating and leveraging its resources into building a functioning and competitive innovation ecosystem. A-1668 and S-354 continue this upward innovation trend to foster collaboration and improve the partnerships between academia, business and government.

For these reasons, NJ BIA would like to thank the sponsors for their interest in supporting New Jersey's innovation ecosystem and we encourage you to vote **"YES"** on A-1668 and S-354.