Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2009

The Honorable Deval Patrick
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

We wish to express our enthusiastic support for the creation of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School of Law, built on the extraordinarily generous donation of assets by the Southern New England School of Law (SNESL). The creation of this law school will be another example of how this university strategically helps our region and Massachusetts expand learning opportunities and educate a new generation of highly productive citizens.

For many years, this law school has provided aspiring lawyers with affordable tuition and fees coupled with a flexible course schedule. This has given some of the best and brightest students who could not afford private law school the ability to reach their full potential. SNESL has worked tirelessly toward ABA accreditation, and these efforts will help accelerate the accreditation process that the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth will now complete.

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has been committed to serving the needs of its students while also making faculty, staff and students available to the industries predominantly located in our region. Fisheries and marine sciences, textiles and an emerging biotechnology industry have all benefited from the relationship with the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. These efforts have made the university a model higher education institution focused on regional economic development.

Dedication to these industries has resulted in new growth for the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. The School for Marine Science and Technology has been a vital partner for the fisheries sector, and their research in stock assessment have helped New Bedford remain the number one grossing fishing port in the country. Fall River's Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center has become a leading player in the nascent marine renewable energy sector and is home to the New England Marine Renewable Energy Consortium.

The university has used its textile manufacturing roots to advance this industry and move into expanding fields of textile and materials research. Its role in the National Textile Center, a consortium of eight research universities across the country, has helped local companies maintain their competitiveness by making higher value textiles used in medicine and the military. The university's materials research successes and skilled graduates have attracted world class biotechnology and biomanufacturing firms to our area and the Bay State.

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The creation of this law school at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth will greatly aid the region's workforce, employers and residents. Providing this new educational resource will directly benefit the industries we have described and many more that make up our region's economy. This law school will give many more highly motivated and talented students the opportunity to further their education. Job creation and economic growth are direct results of creating a more educated workforce.

It is fitting that the work and foundation upon which SNESL was built has made it a vital resource for our region and Massachusetts. For centuries, Massachusetts has benefited from immigrants who came here and worked in industries that formed the basis of our economy. SNESL has been dedicated to the needs of immigrants and has helped them become productive members of our workforce and their communities. In 2002, SNESL created the Immigrant Law Clinic to provide this population with legal assistance.

We appreciate your support and leadership on this important decision for the Commonwealth's future. We urge timely consideration of this proposal so that the state's first public law school class can be enrolled in September 2010.

Sincerely,

Senator John F. Kerry

Congressman Barney Frank

Congressman James P. McGovern