



April 14, 2023

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

On behalf of Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce please support the **Florida Tech – AeroSpace Cybersecurity ENgineering Development** (ASCEND) project as requested in LFIR # 1567 for \$5,000,000 and as potentially funded in the General Appropriations Act this 2023 legislative session.

The Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech), a nationally-ranked Florida STEM university, is pursuing ASCEND, with input from the Florida Aerospace and Defense community, to accelerate key preparation issues in the education of engineers for next generation products and services to include: Anti-Tamper, Software Assurance, Hardware Assurance, Anti-counterfeits, Information Security, Cybersecurity Protections and Technology Solutions.

This Florida Tech ASCEND project will positively impact our organization due to enhanced educational processes for students and faculty in our region. The Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce, per our 2023 Legislative Agenda, supports policies and appropriations that strengthen Florida's important role in supporting the aerospace industry and encourages initiatives that attract, retain, and grow aerospace businesses, activities, and talent on the Space Coast and across the state.

For Florida regions like the Space Coast to maintain a position as a top ten Best Performing City by the Milken Institute, a highly skilled workforce is critical. Therefore, I respectfully request your support of the *Florida Tech – AeroSpace Cybersecurity ENgineering Development (ASCEND)* project to remain in the General Appropriations Act as it is potentially funded to help accelerate higher education workforce development in Florida.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Lane  
President & CEO  
Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce