Good morning and welcome to Vermont Tech. I’d like to thank you all for being here, and thank Senator Leahy for his leadership in this event.

I grew up in Middlesex. I am a Vermont kid, and feel incredibly lucky to have been asked to play a role at this college.

We have our challenges, alongside many other colleges and universities, but I remain bullish about Vermont Tech. Why?

It continues to be the exception to the things that plague higher ed in the public’s eye.

- It is affordable – tuition at $12,000.

- It is accessible, offering two and four year degrees at campuses here and in Williston, and nursing locations across the state.

- Our programs are economically relevant, tied to industries vital to the state: energy, manufacturing, health care, sustainable design and construction, diversified ag, software development and computer systems

- And our students learn by doing. Within a short walk from where you sit is the state’s last educational dairy farm run by students, a three acre produce garden that feeds campus, an anaerobic digester, a welding lab, renewable energy lab, civil and architectural engineering labs, garages for auto-tech and diesel programs, a rope
tow and ski hill, and a mechanical engineering lab where materials strength is taught with our own ski and snowboard press.

- Our campuses are one large maker space.

- Across the state, when I hear employers concerned about their ability to find decent labor force, I know that the work we are doing cuts against that trend. Our students get great jobs: the most frequent criticism is that we don’t turn out enough of them.

- A big part of my job is to reintroduce the college to the state. It matters for people like you to know that this asset is here and accessible to Vermonters who want to achieve economic independence.

That’s why I am bullish about Vermont Tech and excited that Senator Leahy continues to bring this conference to our little hilltop.

Senator Leahy, I’ve been looking up to you since I first trick or treated on your doorstep as a kid in Middlesex. Your legacy can’t be overstated, across Vermont and right here on this campus.

I have a modest token of appreciation. Since we haven’t seen our first generation of snowboards off the pneumatic press over in Morrill Hall, we’ve created our first Vermont Tech season passes for you, Marcelle and Donna.

Thanks for all your support over the years.