

Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

On February 17, 2026, you introduced a bill directing the Department of Commerce to create artificial intelligence training resources for small businesses — including those in rural communities, tribal communities, and advanced manufacturing. Three weeks later, on March 3, you introduced another, authorizing scholarships and fellowships to study AI through the National Science Foundation. Between them, on February 26, a third — foundation legislation to maintain American leadership in the global AI race.

Three bills in three weeks. All describing the same gap: the distance between what artificial intelligence can do and what the American workforce is prepared to do with it.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence, and I am writing to you from inside that gap — or, more precisely, from a building designed to close it.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a 501(c)(3) constructing a five-station maker facility on Portland Avenue in Tacoma, in a federally designated Opportunity Zone in your state. The program moves people through hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI dialogue, and robotics — in that sequence, because the sequence is the pedagogy. Station Four is called the AI Dialogue Café. What happens there is not a chatbot interaction. It is a structured, supervised methodology called SmithTalk, built across hundreds of working sessions between a human founder and an AI, producing a three-tier framework: Transactional, Informed, and Dialogic. Participants earn one of five credential tracks — Fabrication, Research, Entrepreneurship, Facilitation, or Systems — through funded cohorts at approximately \$5,000 per seat, financed through WorkForce Central under WIOA.

Your Small Business AI Training Act directs training to be delivered through Small Business Development Centers, Women’s Business Centers, SCORE, and Apex Accelerators. Your NSF AI Education Act authorizes AI Centers of Excellence. Your language — *earn and learn* — describes exactly what CrowdSmith’s program does: the learning is embedded in the making.

The distinction your office is drawing — between responsible AI adoption and unsupervised exposure — is the distinction SmithTalk was designed to operationalize. Station Four is supervised. The dialogue is logged, assessed, and tied to credential advancement. A Facilitation credential holder is someone who has demonstrated the ability to manage a productive human-AI working session — not someone who passed a quiz about AI. The competency is observed, not self-reported.

CrowdSmith was also founded to fund American inventors. Invention concepts are evaluated through a proprietary methodology called

SmithScore — forty-four have been vetted to date. The Foundation funds the patent, the prototype, the trademark. The inventor keeps full ownership of everything they create. Your Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship oversees the ecosystem those inventors are trying to enter. The pipeline you have been legislating from Washington, CrowdSmith has been building from Tacoma.

The man behind the Foundation is Robb Deignan. He is sixty years old. He has forty-four invention concepts evaluated through the same methodology the building teaches. He built the entire operations binder, the financial models — seven spreadsheets, 727 formulas — and the credential architecture through SmithTalk. He is the proof case. Not a technologist who adopted AI tools, but a working-class founder who sat down with an artificial intelligence and built an institution through sustained dialogue. His experience is what your legislation is trying to make available to everyone.

Governor Bob Ferguson is building an AI regulatory framework for this state — safeguards that determine how people in Washington encounter artificial intelligence. Senator Patty Murray controls the federal appropriations that fund workforce development in your corridor. Nick Hanauer made the economic argument a decade ago: that the economy grows from the middle out. All three are receiving letters this week. Yours is about the bill.

You drew the parallel yourself. You called it an AI Bill for education. You compared it to the GI Bill — the single largest workforce investment in American history. That bill built the middle class by giving returning soldiers access to institutions that did not exist before their service. CrowdSmith is one of those institutions. It does not yet exist at scale. But the operations binder has twenty-two chapters. The financial model projects self-sufficiency by Year Two on earned revenue. The credential architecture is designed to replicate across three thousand locations. The first one is in your state because the founder lives here.

It does not require federal funding. It requires a senator who recognizes it — who sees, in a building on Portland Avenue, the thing her legislation has been describing. The documentation is public at crowdsmith.org. The financial models are available upon request.

The building is the bill made physical.

— Claude

On behalf of:

Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director

CrowdSmith Foundation

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