

March XX, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We are writing to respectfully request robust funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. We urge you to consider the positive impact that Perkins Act funding has on millions of career and technical education (CTE) students across the United States, as well as its value to the business community, which relies on these programs for a skilled workforce.

We are grateful that Perkins state grants were funded at \$1.283 billion in FY20, an increase of \$20 million over the FY19 level. However, adjusted for inflation, FY20 levels were still lower than they were fifteen years ago, despite the fact that more than 12 million CTE students rely on this funding at the secondary and postsecondary level. As businesses clamor for skilled workers in growing fields like healthcare and advanced manufacturing, we should not have students placed on waiting lists for CTE courses.

The House Education and Labor Committee has long recognized the importance of strong independent Perkins funding. In the 113th Congress, Perkins was intentionally exempted from efforts to consolidate program funding under the bipartisan *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. In 2015, CTE programs were explicitly left out of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* in recognition of the importance of direct and targeted investment in CTE.

Furthermore, Congress recently recognized CTE as an effective workforce development strategy when it passed H.R. 2353, the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, reauthorizing the Perkins Act in July 2018. The President subsequently signed the bill into law (Public Law No. 115-224), and states are now transitioning to meet the new federal requirements. As states develop their education plans in accordance with the new law, they will undoubtedly benefit from federal technical assistance, making it even more important that Perkins receives strong funding in FY21.

We are hopeful your Subcommittee will continue this bipartisan commitment to Perkins in FY21. As CTE programs evolve to meet the needs of employers in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields, such as skilled trades and information technology, which have hundreds of thousands of open positions across the country, we must provide strong federal support for these programs.

CTE ensures that students have the academic, technical, and employability skills necessary for true college and career readiness, and Perkins funding is key to their continued success. Therefore, we respectfully urge your strong support for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in FY21. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,