



November 13, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers, and Ranking Members Mikulski and Lowey:

On behalf of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the national organization representing America's teachers, administrators and counselors in the field of career and technical education (CTE) and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), representing the state and territory leaders of our nation's CTE system, we are writing to urge the committee to support CTE through a strong federal investment in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins).

The passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act has helped to alleviate some of the strain of sequestration through an increase in the cap on nondefense discretionary funding. While this agreement is a significant step in the right direction toward strengthening our support for education and workforce training programs, we recognize that there are still difficult decisions to be made regarding individual program funding levels. To this end, we request that the committee restore funding for the Perkins Basic State Grant program to at least \$1.123 billion, equivalent to the pre-sequestration level, and make investing in Perkins a priority in the forthcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 omnibus appropriations bill.

Perkins provides the foundational support for CTE program improvement and allows education providers to build the capacity necessary to serve millions of secondary, postsecondary and adult students. However, funding has not kept pace with the demand for high-quality programs. In FY 2015, Congress appropriated \$140 million less in Perkins grant funding to states than it did in FY 2010. From FY 2007 through FY 2014, total Perkins grant funding to states declined by 13 percent—a 23 percent decline when adjusted for inflation. The erosion of Perkins funds comes at a time when CTE programs are experiencing new attention

and growth. More needs to be done to support high schools, tech centers, community colleges, employers and CTE students across the country.

Perkins is the principal source of dedicated federal funding for CTE, benefiting programs at secondary and postsecondary institutions nationwide. This federal investment is crucial to ensuring that students have the academic, technical and employability skills that are needed for careers in growing economic sectors like engineering, information technology, advanced manufacturing and health care.

At present, states are using Perkins funding to achieve overwhelmingly positive results—meeting or exceeding the accountability targets set under the law in almost every case since 2010. Students involved in CTE programs are more engaged, perform better academically and graduate at higher rates. An educated and highly-skilled workforce provides direct benefits to American employers, strengthening the economy through increases in productivity and innovation. Moreover, Perkins-funded CTE programs are working with business and industry partners to help fill positions that are available today, while preparing a qualified workforce for the careers of tomorrow.

As Congress considers the reauthorization of the Perkins Act, it is more important than ever to show strong support for CTE by investing in Perkins. In March, 88 members of the House of Representatives and 31 Senators sent separate letters to House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittees, urging an increase in Perkins funding in both chambers' FY 2016 appropriations bills. We echo this request, and ask that the committee follow the recommendations of this bicameral, bipartisan coalition by providing a much needed increase for Perkins.

Thank you for your continued leadership on the committee and for your steadfast commitment to restoring regular order to the appropriations process. We look forward to working with the committee in a bipartisan fashion to ensure that building our investment in CTE is a top priority in the upcoming fiscal year. Should you have any questions related to this request, please feel free to contact Mitch Coppes ([mcoppes@acteonline.org](mailto:mcoppes@acteonline.org)), ACTE's Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager, or Steve Voytek ([svoytek@careertech.org](mailto:svoytek@careertech.org)), NASDCTEc's Government Relations Manager.

Sincerely,



Stephen DeWitt  
Deputy Executive Director  
ACTE



Kimberly A. Green  
Executive Director  
NASDCTEc