

June 20, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Subcommittee Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.
Subcommittee Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander, Senator Murray, Chairman Enzi, and Senator Casey:

On behalf of governors across the country, we urge Congress to modernize federal career and technical education policy to reflect our leadership in states to connect education to workforce and industry needs. We believe that innovation in career and technical education (CTE) transcends party and action is needed this Congress to provide students with new opportunities they deserve. We appreciate the vision of the House in passing their bipartisan reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), and we look forward to refining those ideas in the Senate to improve outcomes for students and state economies.

Governors have embraced CTE as a tool to create a nimble education system that builds a sustainable pipeline of talent, attracts new industries to their states, grows small business and accelerates state economies. CTE has become the linchpin of K-12 and postsecondary modernization to up-skill the next generation with real world experience and work-based learning to ensure they secure a good job and live a successful life.

As the Senate moves forward with reauthorization of Perkins, federal law must build on bold progress taking place at the state level. Perkins must have an avenue for educators and school districts to drive statewide innovation. Perkins must also guarantee that industries are engaged in the process to infuse work in the learning experience while students earn relevant, stackable, industry-recognized credentials. Finally, Perkins must ensure that the chief executives of states – governors – are involved in federal CTE policy to leverage the entirety of state government to scale up support for and strengthen connections between education and workforce development.

Democratic and Republican governors stand united in their need for a reauthorized Perkins to:

- **Create a role for teachers, superintendents, principals and school boards in the state plan development process.** Stakeholder engagement is critical, but too often under-utilized. Creating a formal, statutory review/consultation process that includes these groups will ensure that the voice of those closest to the students are incorporated into the state's CTE vision.

- **Build a strong foundation for industry engagement and business collaboration.** States and business leaders are partnering to scale up apprenticeships, work-based learning, immersive on-the-job training and career academies. Perkins should incentivize these partnerships and incorporate industry engagement as a core element of federal law.
- **Create a role for governors to spur innovation in Perkins that aligns with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.** CTE is more than an education law; it is the first foray for students into the world of work. Perkins must be connected to state economic development and workforce systems. As the only official in the state who oversees all of these systems, governors are well-equipped to make those connections in close partnership with their state CTE directors.

Congress can help states continue to fuel job creation by moving quickly to reauthorize Perkins and by including the principles governors present in this letter to reflect ongoing state innovation, reinforcing that CTE is now a critical strategy to ensure a 21st century education for all students.

Sincerely,



Governor Jay Inslee
Chair
NGA Education and Workforce Committee



Governor Dennis Daugaard
Vice Chair
NGA Education and Workforce Committee