April 6, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We are writing to respectfully request strong funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. While we understand that the committee is faced with difficult choices to ensure fiscal responsibility, we urge you to consider the positive impact that Perkins-Act funding has on millions of career and technical education students across the United States as well as its value to the business community, which relies upon these programs for a skilled workforce.

In the Omnibus Appropriations Act passed in January 2014, Perkins was funded at $1.125 billion, an increase of $55 million from FY13. While we are grateful that this funding has been maintained through the current Fiscal Year, it has not kept pace with the growing demand for career and technical education, resulting in a high number of students being placed on waiting lists for CTE courses. Moreover, any reduction in Perkins funding will result in lost job opportunities for young workers and adults looking to reenter the workforce.

The Education and Workforce Committee has long recognized the importance of strong and 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, the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, a bill to reauthorize the Perkins Act, by a vote of 405-5.

We are hopeful your Subcommittee will follow suit and continue this bipartisan commitment to Perkins. As CTE programs evolve to meet the needs of employers in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career fields, such as engineering, information technology and healthcare, it is more important than ever that we provide robust federal support for these programs.
CTE works to ensure that students have the academic, technical and employability skills necessary for true career readiness—and Perkins funding is key to their continued success. Therefore, we urge you to include strong support for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in FY2018.

Sincerely,

James R. Langevin
Earl Blumenauer
Mark DeSaulnier
Alan Lowenthal
Eric Swalwell
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Michelle Lujan Grisham
Alma Adams
Glenn "GT" Thompson
Vincente Gonzalez
Debbie Dingell
Tom O'Halleran
John Yarmuth
Ann McLane Kuster
Elizabeth H. Esty
David Scott
Hank Johnson
Adam Kinzinger
Keith Ellison
Jerry McNerney
Stephen F. Lynch
Patrick Meehan
Emmanuel Cleaver, II
Daniel Lipinski
Joe Courtney
Alcee L. Hastings
David Cicilline
Gwen Moore
Adam Smith
Barbara Lee
Peter Welch
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Al Green
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Richard M. Nolan