

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 30, 2014

Dear Colleague,

We write to encourage you to join the newly-created Senate Career and Technical Education Caucus (CTE). It is our hope that this bipartisan Caucus will consist of a group of Senators committed to both strengthening access and improving career and technical education.

One key to America's continued success lies in improving our nation's educational system. If we are to win the race for talent, we need a long-term plan that produces the best workforce in the world. CTE is a proven solution for creating jobs, retraining workers with the skills they need to fill open positions in the job market, and ensuring students of all ages and all walks of life are career and college ready. It is critical that students have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills that will help them find employment and live productive, successful lives.

For today's students to remain competitive in the 21st century workforce, we need a world-class system of education to ensure a well-educated and technically-skilled workforce. Serving 94 percent of all high school students, CTE integrates numerous aspects of a liberal arts degree into a practical or applied purpose. For example, career and technical education prepares students with industry recognized credentials, professional certificates, and other training for careers as varied as nursing, business administration, manufacturing, oil and natural gas exploration, automotive maintenance, agriculture, software programming, and the culinary arts.

CTE opportunities ensure students are more engaged and graduate at higher levels. According to the Association for Career and Technical Education, the average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in career and technical programs is 90 percent, compared with the national average of 78 percent. Additionally, 81 percent of high school dropouts say real-world learning opportunities would have kept them in school.

CTE will also help close the skills gap to meet the needs of high-growth, skill intensive industries. Approximately 30 percent of jobs by 2018 will require some college or a two-year associate degree, a need which can be met by improved access to career and technical education programs.

The Senate Career and Technical Education Caucus, a counterpart to the House Career and Technical Education Caucus, will support efforts to ensure all students have access to high-quality, rigorous career and technical education to prepare them for college and for their future careers. It will also work to ensure that unemployed and displaced adult and youth workers have better access to training that is accountable, equips them with skills that are relevant in the job market, and ultimately delivers results for the taxpayer. We can accomplish this by strengthening the links between the classroom and the workplace, and from middle school through postsecondary education, and adult education with efforts by both the public and private sectors.

If you would like to join the Senate CTE Caucus, please contact Mary Naylor in Senator Kaine's office ([Mary\\_Naylor@kaine.senate.gov](mailto:Mary_Naylor@kaine.senate.gov)) or Nick Butterfield in Senator Portman's office ([Nicholas\\_Butterfield@portman.senate.gov](mailto:Nicholas_Butterfield@portman.senate.gov)).

Sincerely,



Rob Portman



Tim Kaine