

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
and Education Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
and Education Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we urge you to make a strong investment in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) State Grant program (Title I). Perkins provides the principal source of federal support for program improvement and helps to strengthen the integration of academic and career and technical education (CTE) at secondary and postsecondary institutions. We acknowledge the importance of fiscal responsibility, and would note that Perkins is a federal investment that yields a strong return for our economy. Failing to provide a robust investment in Perkins would be detrimental to 12 million CTE students nationwide, the business community that relies on a qualified workforce, and the future economic competitiveness of our country.

CTE programs continue to evolve and expand to meet the needs of students who want the training and education necessary for success in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career fields such as engineering, information technology, and health care. Perkins provides students with transferable skills that ensure they are college and career ready. It also affords continued training opportunities to many adult workers who need to adapt their skills for a rapidly changing job market. Moreover, CTE programs funded through Perkins work with business and industry partners to help fill positions that are available today while preparing a qualified workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

While the omnibus appropriations act reversed most of the harmful, across-the-board sequester cut to CTE for FY 2014, more needs to be done to support high schools, technical centers, and community colleges across the country. The erosion of Perkins funds has resulted in CTE institutions providing fewer opportunities for teacher professional development, deferring purchase of up-to-date industry-standard equipment for the classroom, and limiting program capacity despite growing student demand.

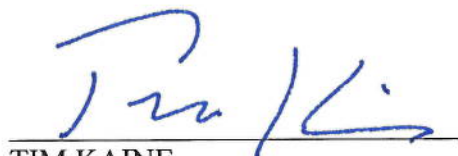
Perkins can serve to bridge the skills gap and ensure the unemployed and under-employed are qualified to take the jobs that will make our economic recovery viable. If further reductions to Perkins continue, many effective education and employment training opportunities will disappear. In order to meet the needs of students, educators, and employers, Congress must make investing in Perkins a top priority for the coming fiscal year.

Given the immense budgetary challenges in FY 2015, we understand the difficult task before you. For the many reasons outlined here, we respectfully request that the Perkins Basic State Grant be funded at \$1.123 billion, equivalent to FY 2012 pre-sequester levels and \$5 million above President Obama's FY 2015 budget request.

Sincerely,

  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate

  
TAMMY BALDWIN  
United States Senate

  
TIM KAINE  
United States Senate

  
DEBBIE STABENOW  
United States Senate

  
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CARL LEVIN  
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BARBARA BOXER  
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SHERROD BROWN  
United States Senate



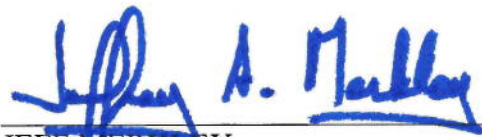
AL FRANKEN  
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BENJAMIN L. CARDIN  
United States Senate



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senate



JEFF MERKLEY  
United States Senate



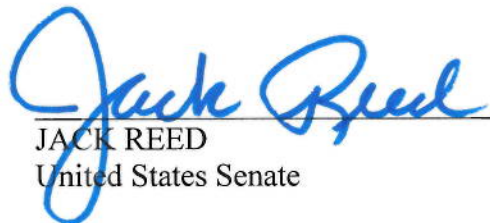
ELIZABETH WARREN  
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MARK R. WARNER  
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BRIAN SCHATZ  
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ROBERT MENENDEZ  
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RICHARD DURBIN  
United States Senate



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AMY KLOBUCHAR  
United States Senate