



September 9, 2021

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education & Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott,

On behalf of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for career success, and Advance CTE, the nation's longest-standing not-for-profit that represents State Directors and leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult career and technical education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories, we are writing to express thoughts on the Education and Labor Committee portion of the Build Back Better Act.

We first want to thank you for your continued commitment to education and workforce development funding, which is clearly evident in this bill. The COVID-19 pandemic has created tremendous burden on our already over-strapped and under-resourced education and workforce systems, and this bill would go a long way to addressing existing funding challenges and helping these systems support the country's economic recovery.

In particular, we are extremely supportive of the \$4 billion total provided for CTE programs, and for the bill's simple and straightforward approach to distributing these funds through the existing Perkins CTE Act's Basic State Grant and Innovation and Modernization funding streams. This distribution method will ensure these new resources are appropriately coordinated with existing CTE resources and plans, informed by robust stakeholder engagement requirements and driven by data-informed decision making. These funds, designed to support CTE program development, delivery, improvement and innovation, are critical to ensuring institutions have the capacity to offer high-quality CTE programs and the supports necessary to put each and every learner on a career pathway to success. While this amount is not the full \$10 billion requested in the Administration's American Jobs Plan, and we hope to continue working with Congress to achieve that full allocation and meet our goal of doubling federal funding for CTE, we recognize it as a strong down payment to ensuring the U.S. economy has the talent pipeline needed to fully recover from the jobs crisis caused by the pandemic and help more Americans achieve success in in-demand career opportunities.

We are also supportive of other education and workforce focused investments in the bill, including funds for apprenticeships, adult education, postsecondary retention and completion, school construction, teacher preparation, education and industry partnerships, and the broader workforce system.

We do want to raise a concern related to the bill's new free community college proposal. Based on the definitions included in the draft legislation, many CTE programs in some states would be excluded from availability to students through this program. In many states, public, fully accredited institutions known as area CTE centers (ATCs) are the primary delivery of postsecondary CTE certificate programs, and due to the fact that they do not grant associate degrees, ATCs would not be included in this important program.

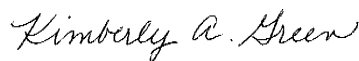
There are nearly 1,200 of these public institutions across the country, with a subset of them in at least 27 states that offer Title IV eligible programs that serve postsecondary students as a key component of the state's postsecondary system (see www.atecenters.org for more information). In many states, ATCs play a very similar role to the community college system, but with a more intensive focus on high-skill, high-wage and in-demand technical career preparation. ATCs contribute to postsecondary attainment goals while remaining nimble and responsive to economic demands, and should be included in the free college proposal to ensure students have access to enrollment in these institutions. ATC leaders across the country are concerned enrollment in CTE programs will be significantly affected if students are not able to access free college benefits at their institutions. As you continue work on the budget reconciliation package, we urge you to ensure ATCs are included in free college proposals and other programs throughout the bill by specifically referencing definitions in either the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Section 3(3) or the Higher Education Act section 101(b) or 102(c).

If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues, please contact ACTE's Senior Director of Public Policy Alisha Hyslop (ahyslop@acteonline.org) or Advance CTE's Senior Associate for Federal Policy Meredith Hills (mhills@careertech.org).

Sincerely,



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Executive Director
ACTE



Kimberly A. Green
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