



May 25, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we urge you to provide robust funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), Basic State Grant program (Title I). The Perkins Act Basic State Grant is the principal source of federal support for CTE programs and is critical in the development of academic and technical knowledge and employability skills for more than 11 million secondary, postsecondary and adult learners.

Perkins CTE programs provide a substantial return on investment while consistently evolving to meet the needs of students and employers. These programs teach students transferable skills to ensure college and career readiness, and retrain adult workers who need to adapt their skills for a changing job market. Providing a robust investment in Perkins would support more than 11 million students across the country, the business community that relies on a qualified workforce, and the future economic competitiveness of our country.

Because of the recent passage of the FY22 appropriations bill, the Biden Administration used FY21 funding levels as the starting point for its FY23 request for all programs, including the Perkins CTE State Grant. Therefore, the Administration proposed an “artificial cut” of \$25 million to the Perkins Basic State Grant program. That said, officials from the U.S. Department of Education have subsequently stated that the Administration intends to support level funding for this program.

As Congress continues to debate economic competitiveness legislation and oversees the implementation of last year’s bipartisan infrastructure law, the need for highly skilled workers has never been greater. Flat funding for Perkins V’s state grant program would not be sufficient to meet the current economic moment.

According to the most recent Job Openings and Labor Turnover (JOLTS) Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the ratio of unemployed workers to job openings is 0.6, meaning that there are nearly two open jobs for every unemployed person. This tight labor market underscores the immense demand for skilled workers, especially as we seek to implement last year’s bipartisan infrastructure legislation. CTE remains a critical component of the workforce pipeline for key

industries that are needed to sustain a long-term economic growth and recovery, such as health care, STEM, manufacturing, construction and transportation distribution and logistics.

However, learner demand for CTE programs, especially programs in in-demand sectors, has exceeded the investment in Perkins funding, and as a result, CTE institutions have been providing fewer opportunities for teacher professional development, deferring purchase of up-to-date industry-standard equipment for the classroom, and limiting program capacity despite this growing student-demand. With current and anticipated demand growing, more resources are needed. It is vital that Congress continues to build upon the recent increases to Perkins V in order to fully support more than 11 million learners it serves across the nation and ensure we have the talent pipeline needed to fully recover from the jobs crisis caused by the pandemic.

As such, while we are pleased that Perkins Basic State Grants were funded at \$1.38 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, an increase of \$45 million over FY 2020, we must do more to support these students, high schools, technical centers, and community colleges across the country. For the many reasons outlined here, we respectfully request that the Perkins State Grant program receive robust funding for FY23. Thank you for your continued leadership and your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



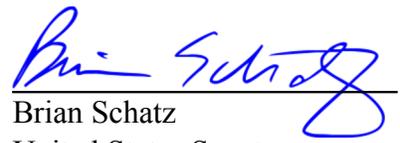
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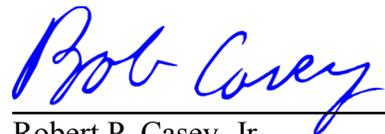
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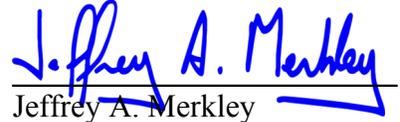
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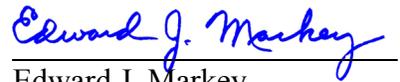
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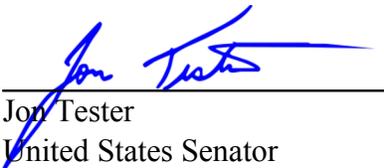
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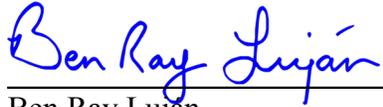
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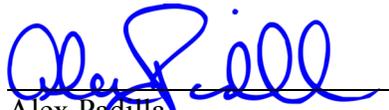
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