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The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and  
Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and  
Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we urge you to provide increased 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 primary federal investment in career and technical education (CTE) programs and is critical in the development of academic, technical knowledge, and employability skills for the nearly 12 million secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners served through CTE programs annually.

Perkins CTE programs consistently evolve to meet the needs of students and employers while delivering strong returns on public investment. For secondary and postsecondary learners, CTE builds transferable skills that prepare students for multiple professional and educational pathways beyond high school. These same programs also serve adult workers who increasingly must acquire new skills to remain competitive in a rapidly changing labor market. Strengthening federal investments in CTE programs through Perkins would support nearly 12 million students across the country, the business communities that rely on a highly skilled workforce, and the future economic competitiveness of our country.

CTE remains a critical component of the workforce pipeline for key industries that are needed to sustain long-term economic growth and recovery, such as healthcare, STEM, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and distribution and logistics. However, CTE is more than a talent pipeline, it is a rigorous pathway that equips students with technical knowledge, industry-recognized credentials, and durable skills they can apply across contexts throughout their careers. Sustained investment in these programs ensures that learners are prepared not just for their first job, but for rewarding careers with the opportunity to grow and advance. This is especially important to ensure that other federal priorities can succeed, this includes our investments in the nation's infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and many other sectors of our shared economy that depend on the talent CTE programs are uniquely positioned to develop.

Despite these needs, the demand for CTE programs, especially programs serving in-demand sectors, has exceeded current levels of Perkins funding, and as a result, CTE programs have been unable to expand program capacity to meet the growing needs of students. States and communities across the country have waiting lists of interested CTE students who are unable to access these critical opportunities. Despite the need for these programs, less than three percent of K-12 funding is currently dedicated to CTE, and this figure is less than one percent without the federal investment made by Perkins. It is, therefore, vital that Congress continues to build upon the recent increases to the Perkins Basic State Grant program to fully support the nearly 12 million learners it serves across the nation.

While we were pleased that the Perkins Basic State Grant program was level funded at approximately \$1.44 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, more must be done to provide additional opportunities for students across the nation. Conservatively adjusting for inflation, the Perkins Basic State Grant program remains significantly below levels of investment 20 years ago and less than half of the federal investment made in 1980. As such, we must do more to support 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 receives increased funding for FY27. Thank you for your continued leadership and your consideration of our request.

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