Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2018

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

We write to you as co-chairs of the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus, which has a membership consisting of more than 100 bipartisan Representatives. We are concerned about reports that the Department of Education is planning to consolidate the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) into a new office of Postsecondary and Lifelong Learning. Maintaining an office dedicated to career and technical education (CTE) is critical if the Administration truly seeks to prioritize CTE and values its impact on secondary and postsecondary learners. CTE programs are diverse and complex, spanning the education continuum. As such, a dedicated office and leader is necessary to ensure they are appropriately supported.

CTE serves both secondary *and* postsecondary students, and the majority of funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which is administered by OCTAE, is allocated to secondary CTE programs. Secondary CTE provides tangible benefits to students and has been shown to reduce dropout rates and improve academic achievement. Moreover, secondary CTE does more than just prepare students for careers; it also allows them to explore interests that they otherwise may not be exposed to. The consolidation of OCTAE into a postsecondary-focused office ignores the important benefits CTE provides students at the secondary level.

The millions of students and employers who rely on CTE programs deserve an office and leader dedicated to the unique role CTE plays in American's education system. A strong secondary-postsecondary connection is vital to high-quality CTE, but the planned reorganization will create additional bureaucratic silos and make collaboration and connection more difficult.

We are disappointed that Congress has neither been consulted on these proposed changes nor had the ability to provide formal feedback, particularly since OCTEA is specifically authorized under the Department of Education Organization Act [20 U.S.C. 3416]. We believe this proposal will have a negative effect on the nation's CTE programs, and we urge you to cease any plans to consolidate OCTAE. We also ask that you consult Congress before acting on any reorganization plans within the Department.

We are happy to meet with you on this subject and facilitate engagement with other CTE stakeholders. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Glenn GT Thompson

Hon. Glenn "GT" Thompson
Pennsylvania's 5th District
U.S. House of Representatives

Jim Langevin

Hon. Jim Langevin
Rhode Island's 2nd District
U.S. House of Representatives

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