

GLENN "GT" THOMPSON
5TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA



AGRICULTURE
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Conservation and Forestry

124 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3805
(202) 225-5121
(202) 225-5796 (FAX)

EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE

NATURAL RESOURCES

<http://thompson.house.gov>

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

March 6, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Co-Chairs of the Bipartisan Congressional Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus, we write to highlight the important role CTE programs play in providing millions of Americans with the opportunity to succeed in high-wage, high-demand jobs. We believe that a robust national CTE policy will help employers meet 21st Century economic demands and close the expanding skills gap in our nation.

Students enrolled in CTE programs have access to comprehensive training in fields such as nursing, agriculture, construction, cybersecurity, energy, and other disciplines that keep our nation competitive. According to the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, approximately 12 million students participated in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs during the 2014-2015 school years. While the rate of participation is encouraging, funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) has not kept pace with demand, and states are reporting high numbers of students being placed on waiting lists for CTE courses. We believe each of these cases is a missed opportunity to expand the American workforce.

Despite the well-documented need for CTE funding, almost half of states still receive grant allocations for programming at or below 1998 levels. Increasing funding levels will help American workers succeed across numerous disciplines and sectors, especially in the skilled trades. Furthermore, if we are to embark upon a new era of American manufacturing and improved infrastructure, we will need a qualified and well-trained workforce to fill those positions. Today, more than one million positions remain open in the trade, transportation, and utilities sectors-and an additional 315,000 manufacturing positions are currently unfilled.

Despite these challenges, improving our nation's CTE programs is supported on a bipartisan basis in the House of Representatives. Last year, we introduced H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. This bill passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 405-5. While the Senate did not take action on the legislation last Congress, we are now in a position to readdress the issue in the 115th Congress.

Just this week, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing, "*Providing More Students with a Pathway to Success by Strengthening Career and Technical Education.*" During the hearing, stakeholders shared their unique perspectives on the value of CTE. Improving our economy requires us to harness the power of a skilled workforce.

TITUSVILLE

127 WEST SPRING STREET, SUITE C
TITUSVILLE, PA 16354
(814) 827-3985 (814) 827-7307 (FAX)

ERIE COUNTY

(814) 217-9457

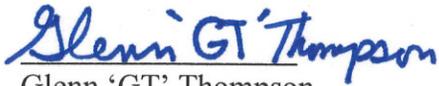
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BELLEFONTE

3555 BENNER PIKE, SUITE 101
BELLEFONTE, PA 16823
(814) 353-0215 (814) 353-0218 (FAX)

As you have stated, our country can—and must—do better to help Americans realize their potential to succeed in the workforce. As you work with the Office of Management and Budget to set your spending priorities for Fiscal Year 2018, we respectfully ask that you consider the opportunity to improve the lives of students, workers, and employers by making CTE programs a priority. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to continuing a dialogue on ways to expand economic opportunities for the American people.

Sincerely,



Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



Jim Langevin
Member of Congress