April 6, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We are writing to respectfully request strong funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. While we understand that the committee is faced with difficult choices to ensure fiscal responsibility, we urge you to consider the positive impact that Perkins-Act funding has on millions of career and technical education students across the United States as well as its value to the business community, which relies upon these programs for a skilled workforce.

In the Omnibus Appropriations Act passed in January 2014, Perkins was funded at $1.125 billion, an increase of $53 million from FY13. While we are grateful that this funding has been maintained through the current Fiscal Year, it has not kept pace with the growing demand for career and technical education, resulting in a high number of students being placed on waiting lists for CTE courses. Moreover, any reduction in Perkins funding will result in lost job opportunities for young workers and adults looking to reenter the workforce.

The Education and Workforce Committee has long recognized the importance of strong and independent Perkins funding. In the 113th Congress, Perkins was intentionally exempted from efforts to consolidate program funding under the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In 2015, CTE programs were explicitly left out of the Every Student Succeeds Act in recognition of the importance of direct and targeted investment in CTE. Furthermore, the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, a bill to reauthorize the Perkins Act, by a vote of 405-5.

We are hopeful your Subcommittee will follow suit and continue this bipartisan commitment to Perkins. As CTE programs evolve to meet the needs of employers in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career fields, such as engineering, information technology and healthcare, it is more important than ever that we provide robust federal support for these programs.
CTE works to ensure that students have the academic, technical and employability skills necessary for true career readiness—and Perkins funding is key to their continued success. Therefore, we urge you to include strong support for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in FY2018.

Sincerely,

James R. Langevin

Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson

Earl Blumenauer

Vincente Gonzalez

Mark P. DeSaulnier

Debbie Dingell

Alan Lowenthal

Tom O’Halleran

Eric Swalwell

John Yarmuth

Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Ann McLane Kuster

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Elizabeth H. Esty

Alma S. Adams

David Scott
Seth Moulton

Andy Barr

Ami Bera

Ron Kind

Mark Takano

Marc Veasey

Carol Shea-Porter

Juan Vargas

Jeff Forte

Mike Kelly

Mark Pocan

Darren Soto

Mike Bost

Anthony G. Brown

Tony Cardenas

Dave Loebsack

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.

Grace Napolitano

John K. Delaney

Niki Tsongas