



July 5, 2016

The Honorable Glenn Thompson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
124 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1721 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Thompson and Rep. Clark,

We write on behalf of the Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition to thank you for introducing H.R. 5587, *The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

We appreciate your commitment to career and technical education and applaud the fresh thinking embodied in the bill, particularly its innovative approach to federalism: combining transparency with targeted reporting requirements to give states flexibility while also holding them accountable for the ways in which they choose to spend federal funding.

The Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition is a business coalition focused on job training and workforce development. Members include employers and employer associations from a broad range of industries experiencing skills mismatches and worker shortages – IT, manufacturing, construction and hospitality, among others.

All our industries count on local educational institutions – high schools and community colleges – to prepare the workforce we need to keep our businesses growing and contributing to the economy. We know employers have a role to play in helping to provide career education, informing educators about changing labor needs and collaborating with them to build and maintain effective programs. And we commend the measures in your bill that encourage and incentivize close working partnerships between employers and CTE educators in the states.

Among the provisions we believe will be particularly effective in driving improvements in career education: the incentives for CTE programs to incorporate work-based learning and recognition of the value of industry-driven occupational certifications. Both work-based learning and industry credentials are indispensable elements of effective career and technical education.

We believe a Perkins Act reauthorized along the lines you propose will trigger new thinking, new collaboration and new, better practices on the ground in the states. This is federalism at its best: federal leadership designed to spur state innovation.

The Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition stands ready to work with you as Perkins reauthorization moves forward on Capitol Hill. Thank you for your support and leadership on this issue of critical importance to our industries.

Yours sincerely,

American Hotel & Lodging Association

American Staffing Association

ASI System Integration

Associated General Contractors

The Building Industry Policy Roundtable

Forging Industry Association

IBM

Independent Electrical Contractors

International Franchise Association

Leading Builders of America

National Roofing Contractors Association

National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

Opportunity America

S & B Engineers and Constructors, Ltd

Cc: The Honorable John Kline  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives