



May 9, 2017

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
House Education and Workforce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi
House Education and Workforce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Reps. Thompson and Krishnamoorthi:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national construction industry trade association with 70 chapters representing more than 21,000 chapter members, I am writing to express our support for the bipartisan “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act” and to urge the House of Representatives to pass this vital piece of legislation.

According to the Construction Labor Market Analyzer, the construction industry is facing a shortage of 1.1 million skilled workers over the next decade. In order to fill this need, it is essential that our nation improves access to high-quality career and technical education (CTE) programs and that these programs are focused on high-demand industries like construction, are connected to local employers and deliver nationally portable, industry-recognized credentials.

At ABC, we don’t just build buildings—we build people. We believe in the merit shop philosophy, which puts people in control of their own destiny and empowers individuals to train for a high-wage career, transform their interests into marketable skills and triumph as professionals who have earned national industry-recognized certifications. ABC member companies back up this commitment with action through their annual investment of \$1.1 billion in workforce training.

In spite of that huge commitment to skilled training, ABC members are eager to do more in the service of our future generations. Our members are looking for great talent to bring into the American skilled workforce and are eager to expand local CTE programs, hire graduates and support their future training to help them progress along the construction career path. ABC and its members are also enthusiastic about increased incentives for CTE programs to utilize work-based learning and greater opportunities for employers to promote construction careers with educators.

The most valuable part of America’s infrastructure is its skilled workforce. In many instances, students are pushed down the college-for-all pathway without the opportunity to choose a CTE program. If passed, ABC believes that the “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act” will take vital steps toward opening up opportunities for students and giving them a competitive advantage in finding fulfilling and high paying careers in the construction industry.

Sincerely,

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Legislative & Political Affairs