



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

September 12, 2016

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Members of Education and Workforce
Members of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the Afterschool Alliance, I am writing to express support for passage of the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (H.R. 5587), a bill to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. I want to thank you for your bipartisan work on the bill and thousands of afterschool programs across the country look forward to its passage into law. This much needed update to the law recognizes that the landscape of career and technical education (CTE) has changed and meets the needs of today's students.

The Afterschool Alliance is a non-profit organization that works to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities to provide them the skills they need to be successful in school and in life. Our network of more than 26,000 afterschool partners is expanding learning opportunities for students nationwide and tapping school and community partnerships to provide strong, effective programs that offer high school students career exploration, workforce skills and 21st Century skills development. Students today learn in a variety of settings, from multiple entities - school, university, business and community-based - working in collaboration, and with many real-world, hands on resources, tools and experiences. Moreover, youth begin pathways to high-skill, in-demand careers with interest and exposure at early ages.

We strongly support the bill language that explicitly includes community based organizations explicitly as eligible entities.

We are aware of many strong career focused programs across the country where afterschool programs play both leading and supporting roles in helping students get exposure to careers and mentors. We can additionally speak to the benefits of including community-based partners as active participants in CTE planning – to coordinate programs, equipment and resources in ways that support students best.

We also support the extension of eligibility down to the 5th grade, an age when students begin finding the interests that keep them motivated to learn and advance through their education and on to careers. The emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning for underrepresented students and career pathways for non-traditional careers, such as girls in computer science, are the centerpieces of programming in many afterschool settings and we are pleased to see these topics highlighted in the bill. Additionally, we are pleased the bill recognizes how important employability skills are to student success. The Innovation Grant Program will allow for the creation and expansion of collaborations that give students outside the box opportunities and communities the flexibility to respond to the needs of changing job markets. The coordination this bill emphasizes will leverage opportunities for so many more students, its time has come. We hope to see it pass in this Congress and are pleased to provide any support or expertise to assist you in this important work.

Sincerely,

Jodi Grant
Executive Director

CC: Members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee

Afterschool Alliance

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