



July 6, 2016

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

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 Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Committee for Children (CFC), we are writing to express our support for committee 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. Perkins is the principal source of federal funding for career and technical education (CTE), and is one of the only federal programs that builds the capacity of secondary and postsecondary institutions to offer CTE programs that are academically rigorous, are aligned to the needs of business and industry and incorporate employability skills. We want to commend the Committee for this bipartisan effort that will strengthen the federal investment in CTE and update the law to meet the needs of today's students.

CASEL is the nation's leading organization advancing the development of academic, social, and emotional competence for all students. Our mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school. CFC is a global nonprofit dedicated to fostering the safety and well-being of children through education and advocacy. CFC is the world's largest provider of research-based educational programs that promote social-emotional skills and prevent bullying and sexual abuse. The organization's curricula reach more than 10 million children in 26,000 schools around the world.

We are pleased that H.R. 5587 includes in the overall purpose of the Act new language that incorporates "employability skills" along with academic knowledge and technical skills. In addition, language throughout the bill allows states and districts to use CTE funds to help *integrate* the teaching of employability skills into career and technical education programs and programs of study. We believe the emphasis on the integration of these skills into the overall academic and technical requirements of programs of study is vital to the overall success of secondary and postsecondary students in the workplace. While it is essential for employees to have the academic and technical skills to succeed in the workplace, leaders of thriving companies also know that critical to their success is a workforce with as much emotional intelligence as possible. Employees that have the skills to collaborate as a member of a team or work independently, as appropriate; communicate effectively; maintain a positive attitude; and contribute to the overarching goals of the workplace are key drivers for increased productivity, innovation, and growth for businesses in the 21st century.

Our organizations know that students can be taught the skills necessary to make them successful in the workplace through evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. SEL involves the processes of developing competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. These skills help students succeed in school and also prepare them for future roles as citizens, employees, managers, parents, volunteers and entrepreneurs. In fact, more and more business leaders cite social-emotional skills alongside technical savvy or subject-matter mastery in their recruitment criteria.

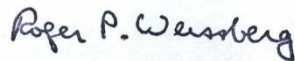
We are also pleased that H.R. 5587 focuses on innovation as well as partnerships between CTE programs and the community, including with business and industry. Such partnerships will only benefit employers by developing pipelines of qualified workers with strong employability skills, while providing students the chance to develop in-demand skills that lead to careers that offer self-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement. CTE is an effective tool for improving student outcomes and helps prepare both secondary and postsecondary students with the necessary academic, technical and employability skills required to be successful in the workforce. Indeed, CTE prepares students both for college and careers.

In closing, we support the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, and we thank the Committee for integrating employability skills into high-quality CTE programs. This bipartisan bill does much to improve current law, which will better serve students and employers.

Sincerely,



Joan Cole Duffell
Executive Director
Committee for Children
Seattle, Washington



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