

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
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July 6, 2016

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

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

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 5587, the "Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act," which is scheduled for markup this week.

The reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE) is long overdue, and the Chamber is encouraged that the Committee is working on a bipartisan CTE reauthorization to help ensure the nation's students enter the workforce with the skills they need to compete for jobs in the high-skilled 21st century workforce.

H.R. 5587 would be an improvement over current law. In particular, the Chamber supports the provisions of this bill that would increase coordination and collaboration of CTE programming with activities under both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); authorize innovation grants to improve CTE and align workforce skills with labor market needs; expand support for dual- or concurrent-enrollment programming, such as early college high schools that provide students with the opportunity to receive postsecondary credit while in high school; integrate industry-recognized credentials; and increase support for work-based learning activities through innovation grants and state leadership activities.

While the Chamber supports H.R. 5587, there are improvements that could be made to help leverage employer leadership and encourage more innovation at the state and local level. This reauthorization should include an expanded focus in the following areas:

- Expand employer engagement by requiring grantees to demonstrate that the business community was given the ability to provide feedback on the development of state and local plans and local needs assessments;
- Prioritize and focus use of state leadership funds for a targeted set of activities related to performance improvements (e.g., pay for success), scaling evidence-based programs and practices, and enhancing professional development;

- Build capacity for innovation through prioritization of expanded reserve funds in order to develop new forms of employer leadership and engagement, such as working with employer networks on job forecasting, managing quality, identifying priority credentials, and developing competency-based hiring requirements and performance metrics that can inform curriculum planning and delivery;
- Include work-based learning as a performance indicator for CTE concentrators, including experiential and applied learning that is in person or through project-based learning that helps with soft and hard skill development; and
- Measure program effectiveness beyond earnings as a way to ensure CTE programs are addressing the skill needs of employers within the local or regional area.

The Chamber thanks you and this bill's cosponsors for your bipartisan leadership on this important issue and urges the Committee to report H.R. 5587 to the full House of Representatives for consideration as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most legible parts.

R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce