

## Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act)

Since its inception in 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act continues to remain a vital element of support for career and technical education programs in all 50 states and the territories. The Perkins Act is the largest federal investment in America's high schools and postsecondary institutions offering CTE programs. In fact, by 2020 it is estimated that 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the legislation aligns with SMRP's mission to develop and educate the increasingly technical workforce. An educated and highly skilled workforce delivers benefits to the American economy through productivity and innovation.

SMRP believes that a newly reauthorized Perkins Act, titled the Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act, is therefore essential to ensuring CTE programs receive the necessary federal investment to support the development and access to high quality CTE programs throughout the United States. To achieve this, SMRP supports the bill, which:

- **Increases Investment for Funding:** Since federal law has not been updated in more than a decade, the Perkins Act has not kept pace with the growing need. For example, from FY2007 to FY2016, total Perkins support for CTE grant funding to states declined by nearly \$170 million. SMRP believes that it's critical to reverse this trend of divestment in critical education and workforce training programs. Therefore, we support provisions from the proposed CTE Act that increase the amount of funding available for state leadership activities to replace and expand evidence-based activities that improve CTE, and more CTE program award grants.
- **Enhance the Quality of Learning for CTE Programs:** The Perkins Act no longer reflects the realities and challenges facing students and workers. SMRP supports provisions for reauthorization that reflect economic demand and target CTE programs for those careers. SMRP is supportive of the reauthorization, because it includes provisions that require states to acquire industry and labor market information, as well as substantive input from regional areas with industry needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020.

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- **Stronger Accountability through Metrics:** In the past, Perkins has been criticized for being vague on need based State fund formula and the return on investment. SMRP commends our legislators that drafted a bill to streamline performance measures and ensure career and technical education programs deliver results for students and taxpayers. School administrators experience difficulties with metrics that are similar, but not quite the same. By having outcomes-based metrics, there is more transparency on successful programs where funding is received. Therefore, we support provisions in the reauthorization that separate governing the uses of Basic State Grant funds at CTE programs at postsecondary institutions.
- **Alignment with Other Federal Educational Programs:** SMRP feels that Congress has a unique opportunity to increase alignment with other educational laws, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA). We appreciate that the reauthorization proposes to unify conflicting federal reporting requirements and the use similar data reported to a state or other oversight body to satisfy WIOA requirements so that educational resources are being put to more useful purposes.

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