



April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, & Ranking Member Cole,

On behalf of Advance CTE, the nation's longest-standing not-for-profit that represents State Directors and leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for career success, we are writing in regards to the fiscal year 2023 (FY23) budget and appropriations process. Specifically, we would like to share our analysis of President Biden's FY23 budget request and to request a \$200 million increased investment in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act's (Perkins V) basic state grant program as part of your committee's forthcoming FY23 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

As you are aware, the Biden Administration formulated its FY23 Congressional budget request before Congress had yet finished work on FY22 appropriations legislation. As a consequence, the Administration used FY21 funding levels as the starting point for developing its FY23 request for Perkins V. For this reason, the Administration proposed an "artificial cut" to Perkins V's basic state grant program of \$25 million dollars. Officials from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) have since contended they support level-funding for this program. Yet, as Congress continues to debate economic competitiveness legislation and oversees the implementation of last year's bipartisan infrastructure law, the need for highly skilled workers has never been greater. Flat-funding for Perkins V's state grant program would therefore be inadequate to meet the current economic moment.

In addition, the Administration has also proposed the creation of a new \$200 million competitive grant program—roughly 15 percent of the total size of all Perkins V funding—which the Administration has dubbed the "Career Connected High Schools" initiative. This competitive funding proposal would unfairly favor funding for eligible entities that already have the capacity to write grants while penalizing smaller and more rural districts and institutions. Distributing funding in this manner would likely further exacerbate many longstanding

inequities in our nation. Notably, the proposal would fund activities that are largely duplicative of how Perkins V state grant funding is already used.

For instance, in its own budget justification, ED estimates that they would only be able to fund 32 grantees over five years. In this same document, ED argues that this initiative would support activities such as work-based learning, dual enrollment, credential attainment, career counseling and navigational supports, as well as educator recruitment and related professional development. Each of these envisioned uses of funds is already authorized as allowable under Perkins V basic state grant funding. Clearly, these funds would be more effectively distributed through Perkins V's basic state grant formula, rather than to fund a small number of grant awards that would benefit a limited subset of our nation's learners.

We appreciate and share the Administration's enthusiasm and support for promoting innovative CTE programs. However, this vision for the future can be more realistically achieved by strengthening our national commitment to CTE by increasing investments in Perkins V's basic state grant program. This program is the primary source of federal support for CTE programs, is provided to every state and Congressional district, and currently serves over 11 million secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners annually. CTE programs allow students to cultivate critically important academic, technical, and employability skills needed to thrive in today's economy.

A highly-skilled workforce delivers direct benefits to American employers through enhanced productivity and innovation. However, the increased demands for these workers have continued to be a persistent barrier to continued economic growth. A projected 15 million new workers will be needed for United States infrastructure over the next decade, including careers in construction, transportation and telecommunications. Meanwhile, 87 percent of companies say that they are currently experiencing a skills gap or expect to within the next few years. The needs of these industries will only continue to grow due in no small part to longstanding demographic headwinds and as we collectively work to implement last year's bipartisan infrastructure legislation.

The programs supported by Perkins V formula funding, ranging from middle grades and high schools to postsecondary institutions serving adults, also produce strong outcomes for the learners they serve. For example, the average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE is 95 percent, compared to a national adjusted cohort graduation rate of 85 percent. Additionally, students involved in CTE are far less likely to drop out of high school than other students, a difference estimated to save the economy \$168 billion each year. Furthermore, these students are highly likely to continue their education—91 percent of high school graduates who earned two to three CTE credits enrolled in college. The outcomes for adult learners are also significant: 86 percent of adults concentrating in CTE programs either continued their education or were employed within six months of completing their program.

Increased funding for Perkins V's state grant program is a national imperative. It is critical both for the learners these programs serve, as well as for the employer community seeking talent. Using the Bureau of Economic Analysis' (BEA) Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index to adjust for inflation—the most conservative estimation of inflation over time—current funding for CTE programs via the Perkins Act remains [\\$403 million below](#) FY 2004 enacted levels. For these reasons, ***we respectfully urge you to increase the investment in this critical program by at least \$200 million in the upcoming FY23 budget and appropriations process.*** While we agree with ED that \$200 million in additional funding for CTE is needed now more than ever, we strongly believe these resources would be better used as part of this existing program rather than to fund a limited competitive grant program which we believe will not serve our nation's learners equitably.

We appreciate your time and consideration of our budget analysis and recommendations. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss the significant funding needs of the CTE community further, please do not

hesitate to contact ACTE's Manager of Government Relations, Zach Curtis (zcurtis@acteonline.org) or Advance CTE's Policy Advisor, Steve Voytek (svoytek@careertech.org). We look forward to working with you and your colleagues throughout the FY23 budget and appropriations process to make this much-needed increased investment in Perkins V's state grant program a reality.

Sincerely,



LeAnn Wilson
Executive Director
ACTE



Kimberly A. Green
Executive Director
Advance CTE

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Rep. Bobby Scott, Chair, House Education and Labor Committee; Rep. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee