

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
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

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time for the American people. As you craft the next emergency COVID-19 response package, we respectfully request that you include targeted funding for career and technical education (CTE). Specifically, we urge you to provide an additional \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2020 for Carl D. Perkins State grants to ensure CTE programs have the resources needed to prepare students for high-skill, high-wage careers fields as the recovery progresses.

Nearly 12 million students are enrolled in CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels across the country. Through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on training, CTE students acquire academic, technical, and employability skills in fields such as information technology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and the skilled trades. These programs benefit not only students, but also the employers in need of high-skilled workers. During the current crisis, we are seeing the consequences of under-investing in our workforce, as hospitals struggle with a dire shortage of nurses.

The public health emergency, and its attendant social distancing, has created unique challenges for CTE programs, which are based on highly technical experiential learning. While all students are struggling to adjust to distance learning, CTE students have lost the critical work-based learning opportunities they need to acquire skills and credentials in CTE fields. In addition to the loss of simulated in-person training, we are concerned that students will be unable to complete internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based experiences in the coming months. In past recessions, employers have been less likely to participate in work-based learning programs as they struggle to deal with broader economic challenges.

The *Perkins Act* is the primary source of federal funding for state and local CTE programs. Providing \$1 billion in supplemental funding for Perkins grants will allow states and schools to update and expand in-person, virtual, and simulated hands-on learning experiences and incentivize employers to participate in work-based learning programs. Summer is quickly approaching – a time when many students participate in on-the-job training programs – and we must act now to preserve access to these experiences or risk our students losing another several months of learning.

We are also aware that many CTE programs have donated protective equipment to frontline healthcare workers during this crisis. Additional *Perkins* funding will help programs replace this equipment, which is crucial to training future workers. It will also help states and local communities respond to employers'

changing needs as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, which is particularly important for the industry partnerships at the heart of the CTE model. In our rapidly changing job market, it's crucial that CTE programs are aligned with employer demands so students can become career-and-college ready.

As Congress continues to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, we must ensure that CTE programs have the resources to train students of all ages for high-skill, high-wage fields and to be agile in the face of these uncertain times. Therefore, as co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional CTE Caucus, we respectfully request additional funding for Perkins state grants in the next relief package. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jim Langevin in black ink.

JIM LANGEVIN
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Glenn 'GT' Thompson in black ink.

GLENN "GT" THOMPSON
Member of Congress