



April 7, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned organizations, representing education and training, employer groups, and students, believe that career technical education (CTE) is a critical investment in the American workforce. We respectfully request that your FY 2010 Budget include at least \$1.4 billion to support secondary and postsecondary career technical education through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins CTE Act).

In your recent address to Congress and in your budget outline you stressed several goals for our country, including the importance of economic growth, reducing the number of high school dropouts, encouraging Americans to go to college, and highlighting the importance of “vocational training” and career pathways programs. A strong federal investment in the Perkins CTE Act will help make these goals a reality. Since Fiscal Year 2002, the federal investment in the Perkins CTE Act has decreased by \$42 million, while enrollment levels have soared to a record high. To realize the full potential CTE can have in our nation’s economic recovery, a renewed commitment in funding this program is necessary.

During this turbulent economic time, it is crucial to note that high-quality CTE programs can provide the education and training necessary to stimulate the economy and provide the solid education that is needed to prepare youth and displaced workers with the skills they need to succeed in today’s highly technical environment. Please consider the following:

- Students who earn a CTE-related associate’s degree or certificate can make an average of \$9,000 more a year than an average individual with a humanities- or social sciences-focused associate’s degree – and those with credentials in high-demand fields such as healthcare can average almost \$20,000 more a year. (Jacobson et al, “Pathways to Boosting the Earnings of Low-Income Students by Increasing Their Educational Attainment,” Gates Foundation/Hudson Institute, 2009.)
- A ratio of one CTE class for every two academic classes minimizes the risk of students dropping out of high school. (Plank et al, “Dropping Out of High School and the Place of Career and Technical Education,” National Research Center for CTE, 2005.)
- CTE students are significantly more likely than their non-CTE counterparts to report that they developed problem-solving, project completion, research, math, college application, work-related, communication, time management and critical thinking skills during high school. (Lekes et al, “Career and Technical Education Pathway Programs, Academic Performance, and the Transition to College and Career,” National Research Center for CTE, 2007.)

The Perkins CTE Act continues to evolve to ensure that workers are well prepared to hold jobs in high-wage, high-skill, high-demand career fields. These include STEM disciplines, nursing, early childhood education, allied health, construction, information technology, energy sustainability and other green jobs, and many other areas that are vital in keeping our nation competitive in the global economy. Even more valuable in our rapidly changing economy, the Perkins CTE Act is doing more than training people for specific jobs, it is giving them transferable skills that will lead to sustained career development.

An increase in funding would enable CTE programs to produce more skilled workers to fill the jobs that are crucial to America’s economy. Thank you for your past and continued support and we look forward to working with your administration in the upcoming budget cycle.

Sincerely,

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 Business Professionals of America
 Center for Occupational Research and Development
 Council for Exceptional Children
 CropLife America
 DECA
 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
 First Technologies, Inc.
 Freshman Transition Initiative, George Washington University
 Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda, Inc.
 Health Occupations Students of America
 John Deere
 Learning Disabilities Association of America
 Manufacturing Skill Standards Council
 National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
 National Association of Agricultural Educators
 National Association of Equipment Manufacturers
 National Association of Secondary School Principals
 National Career Pathways Network
 National Center for Technological Literacy
 National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers
 National Council for Agricultural Education
 National Education Association
 National FFA Organization
 National PTA
 National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
 Skills USA
 Syngenta
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