

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 7, 2005

## **BUSH BUDGET DISMANTLES CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

ALEXANDRIA, VA- Today, the White House unveiled its fiscal year 2006 budget request which includes a proposal to dismantle career and technical education (CTE) programs that are funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act, along with several other education programs in order to fund the President's High School Intervention Initiative, according to the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc).

"This move effectively creates a block grant for high schools," said ACTE President Francie Russell, "We support the Administration's focus on High School reform and feel that career tech programs are integral to achieving the goals of better outcomes for students, but we are concerned the Administration's proposal will severely harm career and technical education programs that are working for students in schools across the country."

Career and technical education programs provide high school students with high-quality skills that prepare them for in-demand jobs. "The President's budget clearly does not recognize or value the important role career and technical education has in high school reform or the role it plays in supporting our country's economic growth and workforce needs," said NASDCTEc Past President Mike Rush. "Career and technical education makes education relevant, keeps kids in school and helps to close the skills gap. If the investment in Perkins is eliminated, our country will lose many of the critical tools necessary to implement the President's goal for high school reform."

CTE also enhances student achievement. Students who complete a rigorous academic core coupled with a career concentration have test scores that equal or exceed "college prep" students. These dual-concentrators are more likely to pursue postsecondary education, have a higher grade point average in college and are less likely to drop out in the first year, reports the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

CTE doesn't only serve the high school community. Perkins funds are also used to fund important education and job training programs at community colleges and other postsecondary settings. Kimberly Green NASDCTEc Executive Director noted that, "Community and technical colleges are on the front lines of preparing youth and adults with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. At a time when our nation's economic health and prosperity relies so heavily on the availability and quality of our nation's skilled workforce, the President's budget proposal eliminates Perkins' critical federal investment in community and technical colleges. This will likely result in critical programs that meet the needs of employers and workers shutting down."

The Bush Administration has previously called for deep cuts of 25% to the Perkins program in its last two budget proposals and Congress has rejected those cuts in the past. However, according to ACTE Executive Director Jan Bray, with an ever tightening budget picture in Congress, ACTE and NASDCTEc remain concerned that CTE programs along with 150 other domestic programs slated for cuts by the Administration could see decreased funding.

Bray added, “Career and technical education makes positive investments in America’s future by educating our youth and preparing our nation’s workforce to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our nation needs to preserve this important program.”

ACTE and NASDCTEc advocate jointly for career and technical education with Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and the White House. The Perkins program is among our nation’s most important investments in high schools, a key component of our postsecondary and workforce development systems, and is vital to American business. Eliminating Perkins funding and funneling it towards a general high school program not only effects existing high school CTE programs but it would harm important postsecondary programs that help provide business and industry with the skilled workers they need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.