



National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

July 5, 2016

Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE), a national nonprofit organization of more than 35 state education agencies and hundreds of local education agencies implementing career and technical education (CTE) programs, I extend our ardent support for Committee passage of the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (H.R. 5587). This legislation would reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) and help ensure that our nation's students have the skills needed to compete for sustainable, living wage jobs in a high-skilled 21st century global economy.

NAPE commends the Committee for its bipartisan efforts to improve Perkins and congratulates Committee members on proposing a Perkins reauthorization bill that continues to support equity in CTE and provides opportunities for all students, including special populations, to become prepared for high skill, high wage careers. NAPE is especially pleased to see the inclusion of specific language regarding: support for special populations; disaggregation of data by gender, race and special population status; closing of gaps in student participation and performance in CTE programs; and support for programs to increase access and student engagement in STEM for underrepresented groups. We are particularly supportive of the following items in the reauthorization proposal that we believe will have a significant impact on equity in CTE:

- Addition of homeless students and students with an active military parent to the definition of special populations
- Increasing the reserve fund from 10% to 15% and including strategies that prepare students for nontraditional fields as a use of these funds
- Increasing the fund for students in State Institutions from 1% to 2%
- Retention of the performance measure of student concentration in nontraditional CTE programs with language that aligns at the secondary and postsecondary level
- Inclusion of an Innovation Fund at the national level
- Conducting a local comprehensive needs assessment that includes an evaluation of the performance of special populations on the core indicators of performance.

- Using the local comprehensive needs assessment as the basis for the local application and the uses of funds
- Supporting a GAO study on programs of study aligned to high-skill, high wage occupations

With regard to State Leadership Activities, NAPE applauds the Committee's inclusion of specific language in HR 5587 that provides state leadership support for programs and activities that increase access, student engagement, and success in STEM fields (including computer science), particularly for students who are members of groups underrepresented in such subject fields, such as female students, minority students, and students who are members of special populations. However, we recommend that this language be moved to the required uses of State Leadership funds. The lack of diversity in the current STEM workforce is one of the most critical issues of our time. It will take all aspects of the educational system, especially CTE, to solve this problem. HR 5587 must make this a priority by including it as a required use of funds at the state and local level.

We are also pleased to see that the Committee has included career exploration and career development activities to the local uses of funds and feels that all those activities identified should be included as part of a high quality CTE program. It is particularly important that eligible recipients be reminded that these career exploration and career development activities must not reinforce stereotypes and should provide students with the opportunity to explore nontraditional careers. However we do recommend that supporting programs and activities that increase access, student engagement, and success in STEM fields (including computer science) for students who are members of groups underrepresented in such subject or fields be included as a separate required use of funds rather than as one of many items that locals may implement. Again, for the same reason we recommend the change in Section 124, this is a critical issue that CTE must help address.

NAPE appreciates your leadership, the collaborative efforts of committee staff and the legislative contributions of our coalition partners in equity, education, organized Labor and business who understand the importance of expanding high-quality CTE for all students through the reauthorization of this legislation. We are committed to continuing our work with you and all of our partners throughout this process and are prepared to be a resource with regard to equity in CTE and how the legislation can support increasing access and success for underrepresented students in high quality CTE programs.

Sincerely,



Mimi Lufkin
Chief Executive Officer