



Advocacy Challenge

June 2017

Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

This month's advocacy challenge is focused on the reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

BACKGROUND

Last month, the House Education and Workforce Committee unanimously passed bipartisan legislation introduced by Reps. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), called the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (H.R. 2353). This legislation updates federal CTE policies to help more students gain the knowledge and skills they need to compete for in-demand jobs. The proposal is largely identical to legislation the House of Representatives passed in September 2016 by an overwhelming vote of 405 to 5. This Congress the bill is expected to be on the floor the week of June 5th. It is still unclear whether the Senate has any time or appetite to take up this overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation and send the bill to President Trump.

AESA supports this legislation because it addresses our major Perkins CTE reauthorization priorities, as follows:

- Reduces the paperwork requirements in Perkins substantially by making critical improvements to the local CTE plans district develop, so school systems can access funds easily and without weighing the cost of continued administrative burdens.
- Emphasizes better alignment with business/industry by ensuring the districts are regularly connecting with business/industry and higher education partners to ensure their programs have the rigor they need so graduating students are on-track to get CTE jobs.
- Allows states more flexibility in designing accountability systems and setting performance targets
- Eliminates the requirement that districts demonstrate "continuous improvement" on the performance targets set by the state.

However, we have one outstanding concern around data collection and district accountability. We do not believe it is fair or helpful to judge the quality of CTE programs based on the performance of students who are CTE "explorers" or students who have completed at least two (2) courses in a single CTE program or CTE program of study. Instead, we believe districts should only be accountable for those students who are CTE concentrators

or students who have completed three (3) or more CTE courses. By holding districts accountable for the performance of CTE explorers as well as concentrators, we believe the data will paint an imprecise if not inaccurate picture of CTE's impact on student performance. We urge the Senate to correct this issue in the House bill.

TALKING POINTS

Reach out to your members of Congress and tell your story:

- Tell your Representatives to pass the HR. 2353 quickly and support this bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Perkins CTE Act.
- Tell your Senators to adopt the House Perkins CTE legislation, but make sure to address the issue with CTE explorers in the bill.

If you need additional information about the program, about your members of Congress, or contact information, please contact Noelle Ellerson Ng, nellerson@aasa.us

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