



July 5, 2016

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of Chiefs for Change, I am writing in support of H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, introduced by Representatives Thompson (R-PA), Clark (D-MA), Byrne (R-AL), Curbelo (R-FL), Langevin (D-RI) and Nolan (D-MN). We are pleased that H.R. 5587 was introduced with bipartisan cosponsors and look forward to working with the Committee on updating the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE) to help ensure more students enter the workforce with the skills they need to compete for high-skilled, in demand jobs.

Chiefs for Change is an independent, bipartisan non-profit organization directed by leaders of state educational agencies and school districts that have demonstrated some of the most notable student gains in the nation. Our mission is to promote local and national policies that are working for students and grow a cadre of leaders dedicated to preparing all students for success in today's world and tomorrow's.

As CTE has not been reauthorized in over a decade, Chiefs for Change is pleased that the Committee is building on recent congressional efforts to update K-12 education and workforce development systems through career and technical education. In particular, Chiefs for Change is pleased that H.R. 5587 (as introduced) would:

- Clarify that CTE programs must provide coherent and rigorous content aligned with the academic standards that states adopt under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA);
- Support alignment and coordination of CTE professional development activities with professional development activities under Title II of ESEA and Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA);
- Encourage better alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including through combined state plans that focus on WIOA and CTE activities;

- Expand the “programs of study” (POS) definition to ensure that CTE programming includes employability skills, alignment with the needs of local industries, progress from general to more specific content, and multiple entrance and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and
- Authorize the Department of Education to support innovation grants (under National Activities) to improve CTE and align workforce skills with labor-market needs, such as through pay-for-success initiatives and integrating STEM fields, including computer science education, with career and technical education.

As the Committee continues with consideration of H.R. 5587, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if Chiefs for Change can be of any further assistance. We look forward to working with Congress to reauthorize CTE in a bipartisan manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia Rafal-Baer'.

Julia Rafal-Baer, Ph.D.
Chief Operating Officer