

Issue Brief

Workforce: Perkins Career & Technical Education Reauthorization

Our chamber supports **H.R. 5587, *The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act***, which was voted out of committee unanimously, 37-0. The bill was sponsored by Congressman G.T. Thompson (R-PA).

Background

In the Pittsburgh region and the Commonwealth, we are in serious need of alignment of our educational systems to meet the workforce demands of the future. Recently, the Allegheny Conference released a comprehensive report, the first of its kind, to investigate the acute nature of this issue. The report, *Inflection Point: Supply, Demand and the Future of Work in the Pittsburgh Region*¹, highlights the critical challenges facing southwestern Pennsylvania's workforce over the next decade. As part of a larger strategy to meet these challenges, the report emphasizes the need for effective career and technical education (CTE.) All occupations are evolving rapidly as a result of technological change, necessitating increased technical skill in the workforce. As it stands today, the regional workforce is unable to meet occupational and industry demand for individuals with adequate technical skills.

H.R. 5587 would begin to rectify the CTE-related challenges cited in *Inflection Point*, which include the need for more effective employer-educator relationships, alignment of programs with occupations in high-demand and the need to address the CTE funding shortfalls school districts face by spending federal funds more effectively.

The legislation focuses on areas where improvements can be made to current law, building upon its past successes and enhancing aspects of the Perkins CTE Act, which will help to better serve both workers and employers.

Conclusion

- We urge Congress to move forward with passage of H.R. 5587 and applaud the ongoing, bipartisan commitment to invest in our nation's students, workers, and economy through the Perkins CTE program.
- We would like the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee to move forward with a comparable bill.

¹ http://www.alleghenyconference.org/PDFs/Misc/InflectionPoint_May2016.pdf