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**Heller, 58 Senators Urge Congressional Action to Renew Career and Technical Education Programs**
*Bipartisan Group of Senators Call for Reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) sent a bipartisan letter with a group of 58 other Senators in calling on Senate leaders to renew the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*,* which provides funding for critical career and technical education programs. The letter was led by U.S. Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and James Inhofe (R-OK).

“It is crucial that the Senate work in a bipartisan effort to help our nation’s students acquire the skills needed to be successful in today’s work environment,” **wrote the Senators in a letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.** “Employers are reporting a shortage of skilled workers to fill in-demand positions. Modernized and relevant career and technical education (CTE) programs, designed with the input of employers and responsive to the needs identified by labor market data, are central to overcoming this skills gap.”

In reauthorizing the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*,* which expired on September 30, the bipartisan group of Senators are calling for the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to focus on: aligning programs to regional labor market needs; supporting collaborations between schools and employers; increasing work-based learning opportunities; and promoting the use of industry recognized credentials. The U.S. House of Representatives reauthorized the program earlier this year in a bipartisan vote.

**The letter, which can be found** [**here**](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/22715ff6-5640-41d8-a2af-a0381c19db55/2017-10-11-%20CTE-Perkins%20to%20AlexanderMurray.pdf)**, reads in full:**

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

We urge that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions take action on reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act as soon as possible during the 115th Congress. It is crucial that the Senate work in a bipartisan effort to help our nation’s students acquire the skills needed to be successful in today’s work environment.

Employers are reporting a shortage of skilled workers to fill in-demand positions. Modernized and relevant career and technical education (CTE) programs, designed with the input of employers and responsive to the needs identified by labor market data, are central to overcoming this skills gap.

New legislation should focus on areas where improvements can be made to current law, such as:

* Align CTE programs to the needs of the regional, state, and local labor market;
* Support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions and employers;
* Increase student participation in work-based learning opportunities; and
* Promote the use of industry recognized credentials and other recognized postsecondary credentials.

These improvements will more effectively spend federal dollars to help our nation’s students acquire the skills that they need and employers are demanding. We urge you to move forward with reauthorization of Perkins Career and Technical Education and hope to continue a bipartisan commitment to invest in our nation’s students, workers and economy through the Perkins CTE program.

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