



Issues Update

May 19, 2017

Issues Update is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and presented on its website, www.kacteonline.org. As needed, *Issues Update* will report on state and federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) policy and legislative developments. KACTE and Stone can be reached at kmstone1951@gmail.com or 502-223-1823.

Congress Funds CTE; House Starts Perkins Update

Federal action on Career and Technical Education (CTE) continues both for appropriations and for reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

The delayed final appropriation bill for federal programs was approved by Congress in early May, and it

contains level funding for CTE programs under the Perkins Act basic state grant. It reinstates Pell Grant amounts and adds \$400 million for K-12 student support services, including career guidance. The appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017 contrasts sharply with the Fiscal Year 2018

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Advocate for CTE Fiscal Year 2018 Federal Appropriations

Information reported in the *Washington Post* and distributed by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and Advance CTE indicates the Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposed by the Trump Administration will cut federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding 15 percent or \$168 million. KACTE Legislative Liaison Dexter Knight directed communication be sent to each member of Kentucky's congressional delegation asking them to reject the cut and fund CTE appropriately.

Following is communication sent by KACTE to Kentucky's congressional delegation. Knight asks each KACTE member to use the facts in the communication and contact their representative and Senators McConnell and Paul to support adequate appropriations for CTE programs funded through the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*.

"This communication seeks the assistance of Congressman Name (or Senator Name) to support workforce and economic development by maintaining and investing in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs through the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*.

"May 17, 2017, was a day of contradiction. As the House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce unanimously approved the reauthorization of the *Perkins Act (HR2353)*, sending it to the full House which adopted similar legislation last year 405-5, a *Washington Post* article reported that the budget proposal for the Department of Education would cut funding for *Perkins Act* programs by \$168 million (15 percent).

"The proposed cut will be part of the Fiscal Year 2018 budget scheduled for presentation to Congress by the Trump Administration on May 23. This cut would be harmful to workforce and economic development as noted by Education and the Workforce Committee Chair Rep. Virginia Foxx speaking before the American Enterprise Institute: "These programs are helping countless men and women acquire the knowledge and skills they need to compete in the workforce and build fulfilling careers . . ."

"Recognition of CTE's vital role in preparing America's workforce and its demonstrated effectiveness speaks to an education program that works. For example, in Kentucky the graduation rate of CTE preparatory students is 98 percent compared to 89 percent for graduating seniors as a whole. Investment in CTE is supported by a broad group of businesses and industries and their trade organizations.

"A further contradiction is the proposed cut to CTE would impact the preparation of the workforce necessary to implement President Trump's planned \$1 trillion investment in upgrading and repairing the nation's infrastructure. That project cannot be accomplished without the skilled workers produced through CTE.

"As Congress acts on Fiscal Year 2018 budget and appropriation legislation, please reject cuts to CTE programs authorized under the *Perkins Act*. Please invest in America's workforce by providing adequate funding for these programs. They work and deserve an increase, but at the very least should be level funded.

"Thank you for your consideration of this request."

Congress Funds CTE; House Starts Perkins Reauthorization

appropriations proposed by the Trump Administration as reported by the *Washington Post*. The proposal to be released on May 23 cuts federal education spending by \$10.6 million, including a 15 percent (\$168 million) cut to *Perkins Act* programs.

As detailed elsewhere in this *Issues Update*, KACTE is advising Kentucky's congressional delegation to fund CTE at adequate levels. KACTE Legislative Liaison Dexter Knight asks KACTE members -- and all CTE professionals -- to contact their federal legislators and urge adequate funding of CTE through the Perkins Act. Suggested communication is provided.

Perkins Reauthorization

On May 17, the U.S. House of Representatives Education and the Workforce Committee unanimously approved HR2353, the reauthorization of the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act*. The bill, which is similar to the version that passed the House 405-5 last year, now goes to the full House for action. Although discussions have started, the Senate has not formally moved on Perkins reauthorization.

The unanimous Committee vote, coupled with last year's vote for reauthorization, indicates the strong support in the House for CTE. According to a fact sheet released by the Committee, the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*:

- Empowers state and local community leaders by simplifying the application process for receiving federal funds and providing more flexibility to use federal resources to respond to changing education and economic needs.
- Improves alignment with in-demand jobs by supporting innovative learning opportunities, building better community partnerships, and encouraging stronger engagement with employers.
- Increases transparency and accountability by streamlining performance measures to ensure CTE programs deliver results, empowering parents, students, and stakeholders with a voice in setting performance goals, and evaluating the effectiveness of local programs.
- Ensures a limited federal role by reining in the Secretary of Education's authority, limiting federal intervention, and preventing political favoritism.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and Advance CTE, the national association of the state directors of CTE, issued a joint statement praising the Committee's work, noting: "The *Perkins Act* is a critical investment in our nation's education and workforce development systems and helps prepare youth and adults for success in the 21st Century economy. More on *Perkins Act* funding and reauthorization may be found on the ACTE website, <http://ctepolicywatch.acteonline.org/>.

Infrastructure Week and Skills Gap

Interestingly, May 15 was the start of Infrastructure Week, and U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and others cited the importance of CTE. This also was the week the *Washington Post* reported a proposed 15 percent cut to CTE funding in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget. (Please see "Advocate for CTE" in this *Issues Update* for more details.)

A suggestion was offered at a forum presented by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, by Terry O'Sullivan, General President, Laborers' International Union, that CTE is so important that a portion of the federal funding allocated to infrastructure be directed toward skills training.

Secretary Chao, wife of Kentucky Senator and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, praised the value of CTE to address the shortages in skilled workers. "Far too many workers are being left behind because they are not equipped with the skills in demand in our rapidly changing economy," she said.

The contrast of the support for CTE and the critical importance cited by Secretary Chao and other speakers at the Infrastructure Week forum with the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget cut to CTE was striking. It also brought into focus the skills shortage.

Speaking at the Chamber's forum, Jay Timmons, President and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers, said there are 350,000 manufacturing jobs unfilled today because there are not enough workers with matching skills to fill the positions. He continued saying if the skills shortage is not addressed soon, "we are going to have about 2 million jobs that are unfilled in 10 years: From soup to nuts, we've got to have the workforce ready and available to get the job done."

Kentucky Chamber of Commerce President and CEO David Adkisson looked at the skills shortage from a different angle in an April 25 op-ed. "By 2020, 57 percent of jobs in Kentucky will require a postsecondary degree or other certification," he wrote. "Currently, only 32 percent of adults in our state have such a credential. That means there is a 25 percent skills gap."

One tool to help close the skills gap is providing easy-to-use and understandable guidance about jobs available and the education needed for the work. The Kentucky Workforce Innovations Board (KWIB) Data Performance and Accountability Committee is working to create a "dashboard" of data elements to serve that purpose.

Initially concentrating on KWIB's five priority industry sectors -- health care, manufacturing, business/information technology, construction, and logistics -- the dashboard will present demographics about the workforce (population, educational attainment, etc.) and information on the industries (vacancies, wages, demand, etc.). Combined with guidance on the career readiness required for the jobs, information can guide reducing the skills gap.