



Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

Desired Action

WMMA strongly supports the timely reauthorization and updating of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) to strengthen manufacturing competitiveness and create a pathway for family wage jobs and rewarding careers.

Background

According to a study by Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute, U.S. manufacturers face a worrisome challenge to find qualified candidates to fill 2 million of the nearly 3.5 million jobs available by 2025. One of the major factors contributing to this critical shortage of skilled workers is the gradual decline of technical education programs in public high schools.

In 1984, Congress passed the Perkins Act “to increase the quality of technical education” and the legislation has been instrumental in helping address the skills gap and U.S. manufacturing competitiveness by supporting secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs at state and local levels. It was last reauthorized in 2006 and while still being funded, is overdue for an update to meet the workforce needs of technology-driven manufacturing. With the absence of federal legislation, in the 2017 calendar year, 49 states and Washington, D.C., carried out a total of 241 policy actions related to career technical education (CTE) and career readiness, including legislation, executive orders, board of education actions and budget provisions. This is a substantial increase from 2016.

Recent Legislation

On June 22, 2017, the House of Representatives voted by voice vote to pass H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The bill reauthorizes the Perkins Act through Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. The bill is now in the Senate, where concerns around issues of Secretarial authority stalled discussions in Fall 2016. The legislation would give states more flexibility to determine the best use of these funds to support high school and postsecondary CTE programs. It also would enhance career and technical education through increased focus on employability skills, work-based learning opportunities and meaningful credentialing so students are prepared to enter the workforce poised for success.

About the WMMA

Founded in 1899, the Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America (WMMA) is a professional trade association composed of more than 230 North American manufacturers of woodworking equipment, cutting tools and supplies whose purpose is to promote the interests of its members serving the woodworking industry. Members’ products are used in the production of furniture, cabinets, millwork and other wood products. Many members also serve the plastics, stone and non-ferrous metals markets. WMMA members’ equipment is sold worldwide. Learn more about the WMMA at www.WMMA.org.

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