



## Funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

### **Desired Action**

WMMA strongly supports full funding for career and technical education (CTE) programs, including the timely reauthorization and updating of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act), in order to strengthen manufacturing competitiveness and create a pathway for family wage jobs and rewarding careers.

### **Background**

Career and technical education (CTE) programs focus on much needed concrete, in-demand skills and provide students with opportunities apply those skills immediately in the workforce. These courses deliver to students the academic and technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions. According to a study by Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute, U.S. manufacturers will need to find an additional 2 million qualified candidates to fill 3.5 million openings by 2025.

The U.S. Congress has long supported career and technical education as a pathway to success. According to the Brookings Institute, the first federal law providing funding for vocational education was passed in 1917, even before education was compulsory in every state. In 1984, Congress passed the Perkins Act “to increase the quality of technical education” and the legislation has been instrumental in helping close 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.

### **Legislative Activity**

There are numerous pieces of legislation, many with innovative funding mechanisms, that provide much needed funding for CTE. The WMMA supports those that provide immediate and long-term funding to start addressing the looming skills gap. 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](http://www.wmma.org).*

**Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America**  
9 Newport Road, Suite 200, Forest Hill, MD 21050  
443-640-1052 | [www.wmma.org](http://www.wmma.org)