



Construction Industry Round Table

Legislative News

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06/22/2017 – House Passes Career Technical Education Bill

“*The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*” passed with an overwhelming bi-partisan vote in the House on Thursday, June 22nd. The legislation seeks to reform and reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Career and technical education, or CTE – has emerged in the past decade as one of the most promising approaches to preparing students for the future. CIRT has pressed the new Administration regarding inclusion of a “talent” or workforce element in the President’s “infrastructure initiative” and has found a very favorable hearing/reaction.

“As a group of employers and employer associations in industries that hire workers with technical skills, the Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition is particularly pleased by what the bill does to encourage employers and educators to work together,” said Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby, which CIRT is an active member. Among provisions of particular interest to employers:

- Incentivizes programs that prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations – not the old, usually irrelevant “Home Ec” or “Wood Shop.”
- Requires robust consultation between educators and employers, giving business a say in setting state performance goals and assessing skills in demand at the local level.
- Incentivizes programs that lead to attainment of “recognized postsecondary credentials,” including industry-recognized certifications.
- Support and incentivizes programs that incorporate work-based learning, including internship and other on-the-job experience.
- Gives states more flexibility to use federal funding to meet local education needs, including with competitive grant programs to foster innovation.

Next step for the legislation is on to the Senate, where it has traditionally met with stiffer opposition and/or delays as the Senators attempt to reflect their particular preferences in the provisions of the bill.