

Testimony for United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
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Good morning! Thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts on the future of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. I am Monty Sullivan, President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, a collection of thirteen two-year colleges serving over 150,000 students and providing administration and leadership for the Perkins-funded efforts in Louisiana. I am also a member of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and a Board member of the Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC).

Reauthorization of the Perkins Act is a critical step forward for our nation as addressing the skills gap continues to be one of the foremost challenges for igniting our economy and, more importantly, for improving the lives of Americans from all walks of life. I hail from a state with a rich career and technical education history. In fact, most recently Lumina Foundation's "A Stronger Nation Report", indicated Louisiana's overall working age adult postsecondary attainment rate improved from 50th to 26th in the nation- a key factor in that dramatic improvement was the inclusion for the first time of less than associate degree credentials. Louisiana ranks first in the nation in the percentage of adults with a high quality postsecondary certificate as their highest level of attainment. The strategic investment of Perkins funds has been instrumental to our performance.

This success has occurred in an environment with sharply declining state resources and increasing tuition. Meanwhile, Louisiana's economy continues to show strong workforce demands in spite of the recent downturn in the oil and gas sector. The combination of a strong demand market, narrowing state resources, and increasing tuition costs has forced our colleges to focus more keenly on responding to the workforce needs of industry, improving the value proposition for our students, and maximizing every single dollar. Simply put, alignment of programs and resources to market demands has been key to our success.

The following is a list of policy recommendations for your consideration:

1. **Align the Perkins Act with the tenets of WIOA to focus on solving the workforce challenges of states and communities.** WIOA provided a foundation for data, definitions, and success measures that focus on regional labor market demands. Labor market data should drive investments and be a key factor in performance metrics. Specifically, in the postsecondary measures, states with access to earnings data should use it to demonstrate performance. And funding should be viewed as a means to underwrite programs that meet future workforce needs.
2. **Emphasize regional consolidated plans across education sectors with significant industry engagement.** The most successful career and technical education efforts have

strong partnerships and substantive industry contributions (both financial and non-financial). These partnerships should be a basic tenet of Perkins.

3. **Encourage dual enrollment opportunities focused on completion of high demand credentials.**
4. **Under the special populations provisions of the Perkins Act, consider focusing on key populations.** Community colleges serve a broad cross section of people. Those most in need of training are often adults with no high school diploma and returning military veterans. Consider making specific allowances for these populations.
5. **Accountability should focus on ends measures not processes.** Set out the purpose of the Perkins Act and measure our efforts based upon outcomes meaningful to students and communities.

The reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act is an opportunity to target resources at one of the nation's most pressing challenges- educating and skilling our most precious natural resource, our people. The programs funded through this Act are today and will be more so in the future the path for millions in pursuit of the American Dream. I wish you the best in the work before you.

Thank you.