

**TESTIMONY – UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE**



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NCCER - Senior Director of Governmental Relations

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Tim Johnson and I serve as the Senior Director of Governmental Relations for the NCCER. Thank you for allowing us to participate in today's hearing.

NCCER is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) education foundation created in 1996 as The National Center for Construction Education and Research. It was developed with the support of more than 125 construction CEOs and various association, including the Associated Builders and Contractors and the Associated General Contractors, and academic leaders who united to revolutionize training for the construction industry. Sharing the common goal of developing a safe and productive workforce, these companies and their organizations created a standardized training and credentialing program for the commercial and industrial construction industries. This progressive program has evolved into curricula for more than 70 craft areas and a complete series of more than 70 assessments offered by over 700 NCCER accredited sponsors in over 5,000 NCCER-accredited training and assessment locations across the United States. The NCCER's programs and processes annually engage more than 500,000 individuals. Our Board of Trustees is a "who's who" of industry - ExxonMobil, Shell, DuPont, Bechtel, Fluor, Jacobs, Turner Industries, Performance Contractors, ISC Constructors. We also have board members from organizations like Skills USA and the Association for Career and Technical Education.

NCCER develops standardized construction and maintenance curriculum and assessments with portable credentials. These credentials are tracked through NCCER's Registry that allows organizations and companies to confirm the qualifications of their craft professionals and/or check the qualifications of possible new hires. NCCER's registry also assists craft professionals by maintaining their records in a secure database.

NCCER's workforce development process of accreditation, instructor certification, standardized curriculum, registry, assessment and certification is a key component in the construction industry's workforce development efforts. NCCER also drives multiple initiatives to enhance career development and recruitment efforts for the industry, primarily through its Build Your

Future initiative. NCCER is headquartered in Alachua, Florida, and is affiliated with the University of Florida's M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management.

The NCCER is a believer in and supporter of Career and Technical Education (CTE). We believe that CTE is being transformed across the United States and great “pockets of excellence” have been created. Our challenge is to take those pockets of excellence and, based on regional and specific needs, make them standard practices. We must place additional focus on what I call the Four P’s of CTE – PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION.

The focus of my remarks today will be the critically important link between industry’s specific needs and the education and training that CTE programs provide. All of the NCCER programs and processes are driven directly by our industry partners. Our 70+ craft curriculum titles are developed and regularly updated by construction industry Subject Matter Experts. For example, our process identifies and brings together some of the premier electricians in the United States to originally develop and constantly update our electrical programs. We must ensure that what is being taught includes the VERY latest technology and practices. In all of our programs, the NCCER does just that.

We are also working in other ways to more closely link industry and education. We have developed the Construction Career Pathways initiative to provide guidance, best practices and practical tools that can be used by both industry and education to connect. This initiative has created an online connections map that allows industry representatives and educators to connect locally. By providing a fillable form to list contact information and needs, local teachers can find contractors in their area that are willing to help with their programs through presentations, curriculum guidance and/or career events.

<http://pathways.nccer.org/connection-map/>

We also know that to have a successful and productive CTE program, we must identify and employ skilled and capable instructors. I had the great pleasure of managing a large privately funded craft training program for a number of years, and I learned very quickly that instructors are the lifeblood of any training program. I say often that it is easier to turn a pipefitter into a teacher than it is to turn a teacher into a pipefitter. That means no disrespect to professional educators. I come from a family of them. The key to CTE is to find skilled craft professionals who have some communications skills and provide them with instructional training and resources. The NCCER does this through our Instructor Certification Training Program (ICTP) and our Master Trainer Program. These programs ensure that individuals who instruct in our accredited programs have the craft and teaching skills to bring the learning to life for their students.

In my home state of Louisiana, where more than \$80 billion of industrial development and expansion has been announced, the NCCER is helping to drive great collaboration between industry contractors who build and maintain their industrial facilities, educational systems, state governmental agencies, and private training providers. The Louisiana Department of Education (K-12), the Louisiana Community and Technical College System are both accredited by the NCCER to provide our programs and processes. A large number of contractor companies have sought and received accreditation from the NCCER. Major private training providers like the Associated Builders and Contractors have large training centers in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lake Charles are accredited by the NCCER. The Louisiana Workforce Commission and the number one ranked public workforce development program in the United States for 6 years in a row, Louisiana FastStart, are linked to the NCCER through productive partnerships.

While my time limit will not allow me to elaborate, we must also continue to develop more systematic ways to move individuals from training directly into careers. In the construction industry specifically, we know we lose too many individuals in whom we have invested training resources.

The NCCER has developed in to one of the premier workforce development organizations in the United States and that success can be directly linked to the fact that we are, and have been from our inception, driven specifically by industry needs.