



September 6, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Leahy:

As Congress considers federal appropriations for fiscal year 2020, the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) urges you to support increased funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act State Grants, which support career and technical education (CTE) programs operated at the state and local levels. This funding is critical to high schools, community colleges, small businesses and the students who need training to help close the skills gap in today's workforce.

Established in 1886, NRCA is one of the nation's oldest trade associations and the voice of roofing professionals worldwide. NRCA's nearly 4,000 member companies represent all segments of the industry, including contractors, manufacturers, distributors, consultants and other employers in all 50 states. NRCA members are typically small, privately held companies with the average member employing 45 people and attaining sales of \$4.5 million per year.

Perkins funding is absolutely vital to the future workforce development needs of the roofing industry. Chronic workforce shortages are the top challenge facing roofing industry employers in today's economy, as demographic trends and economic conditions make it increasingly difficult to fill well-paying, family-sustaining jobs. NRCA was pleased to support the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act which was enacted by Congress in 2018, and increased funding for CTE programs authorized by this new law is crucial to its success.

Unfortunately, congressional appropriations for CTE programs have not kept pace with growing demand in recent years, and total Perkins funding remains lower than it was a decade ago. To address the growing skills gap, Congress must prioritize investments in this crucial area.

CTE provides access to opportunities for students who want to develop skills, increase their knowledge and contribute to their communities by pursuing a rewarding career. Failure to make strong investments in CTE will negatively affect students who are striving to obtain the skills to meet today's workforce needs and the employers who power our economy. Increasing investments in Perkins CTE programs is essential to sustaining strong economic growth throughout the U.S.

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Thank you for your attention to NRCA's views on this important issue. For questions, please contact Duane Musser, NRCA's Vice President of Government Relations, at 202-546-7584 or dmusser@nrca.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reid Ribble". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "R".

Reid J. Ribble
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: All Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee