

April 11, 2006

## **Issue: Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical Education Funding**

The President's FY07 budget eliminates Carl D. Perkins grants, which provide critical resources to career and technical education programs at secondary and post secondary levels. Perkins grant programs integrate academic, vocational, and technical instruction by using work-based learning to provide technical preparation in career fields. Career and Technical Education (CTE) infuses applied academics such as math, science, communication, problem solving, and information seeking with the basic knowledge necessary to learn technical concepts and skills.

If the investment in Perkins is eliminated, our country will lose critical tools necessary to ensure America's economic and global standing. According to the National Summit on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs, the percentage of unskilled and skilled jobs in America has changed dramatically between 1950 and 1997. Jobs for skilled workers increased from 20% to 65% while jobs for unskilled workers decreased from 60% to 15%.

Benefits of career and technical education funded through the Perkins Grant include:

- Active involvement in the learning process as well as rigorous course work developing marketable skills in students
- Demonstration of the relevance of academics in real life
- Encouragement to seek post secondary education while preparing students for immediate placement in the workforce
- Focus on a broad range of occupations, or career clusters
- A technically proficient and better prepared workforce
- Reduced drop out rates and a strengthened economy
- Incorporation of occupational skills into the broader knowledge and competencies necessary for long term success in industry
- Creation of a better workforce locally as well as national defense (Trident Refit Facility employs 15 Camden students from CTE classes)

Programs offered through career and technical education are vital to closing the gap between the requirements of highly-technical, information-based industries and the skills of many in the current workforce. Support for CTE funding is essential to ensuring the US has a talented pool of well-trained, technically proficient Americans ready to fill the needs of our country's job market.

### Action:

Work to reinstate Carl D. Perkins Grant funding for career and technical education. This is an integral part in supporting our economic growth and workforce development.

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