



June 26, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the National Restaurant Association, we strongly support the “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act,” which would reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act that provides federal support to state and local career and technical education programs.

The National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant and foodservice industry, representing more than 15.1 million employees, nearly 10 percent of the nation’s workforce. With one million locations across the country, the \$825 billion in sales from the restaurant industry makes up four percent of the U.S. GDP. Our nation’s restaurants are a vital training ground for the American workforce, providing real-life skills and opportunities for successful careers. One-in-three Americans obtained their first job in the restaurant industry, and one-half of all Americans have worked in the restaurant industry at some point in their lives.

Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is critical to restaurant and foodservice industry workforce needs. Specifically, it allows the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation’s (NRAEF) ProStart program to reach nearly 140,000 students in more than 1,800 high schools across 50 states, the Territory of Guam and at the Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Europe and the Pacific. From culinary techniques to management skills, ProStart’s industry-driven curriculum provides real-life experience opportunities and builds practical skills and a foundation that will last a lifetime.

The bipartisan legislation would help students obtain invaluable skills and hands-on experience to compete and succeed in the job market, while supporting employers’ workforce needs. This thoughtful legislation strikes the right balance in supporting the state and local role by providing increased flexibility to states to tailor program and performance levels to local and community needs. The bill enhances transparency and data selection to better assess the programs that are doing well and those in need of improvement. Importantly, it encourages meaningful collaboration by providing opportunities for employer and stakeholder engagement to shape state performance plans and increases professional development opportunities for faculty and teachers to provide greater impact in the classroom.

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Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Meade".

Shannon Meade  
Director, Labor & Workforce Policy  
National Restaurant Association

cc: Members of U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions