

April 19, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to you concerned about the U.S. Department of Education's proposal to consolidate the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) into a new office of Postsecondary and Lifelong Learning. Following a [recent letter](#) sent to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos by Representatives Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Jim Langevin (D-RI), Department spokesperson Liz Hill [told POLITICO](#) that, "Merging these offices will require congressional approval."

We urge you to carefully scrutinize any reorganization plans submitted to Congress by the Department, and to specifically oppose the elimination of OCTAE and efforts to consolidate its functions into a new Postsecondary and Lifelong Learning office or any other office due to the following:

- **CTE Serves both Secondary and Postsecondary Students.** A postsecondary-focused office ignores millions of secondary CTE students. It is important that OCTAE remain a resource supporting programs that help students navigate secondary education, postsecondary education and the workforce and continue its unique "connector" role within the Department. Eliminating OCTAE would unnecessarily isolate secondary CTE programs and be counterproductive to efforts to bridge the gap between education and careers. Additionally, more than two-thirds of the funding administered by OCTAE through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is allocated to secondary CTE, requiring devoted resources and expertise.
- **CTE and Adult Education Require a Dedicated Office and Leader to Thrive.** Eliminating OCTAE will hinder efforts to promote CTE programs and their value, reduce the ability of the Administration to fulfill its workforce development agenda, and slow or cease the support that OCTAE currently provides to CTE programs at all levels of education. CTE's unique role in the nation's education and workforce development system requires a dedicated office and leader to ensure all students have access to high-quality programs.

Eliminating OCTAE could directly or indirectly impact countless business and industry sectors, millions of CTE students, and dampen efforts to bridge the skills gap. OCTAE as structured is an important branch of the Department, provides vital support to CTE programs at all levels and provides for a federal voice dedicated to CTE. We urge you to oppose any efforts by the Department to consolidate OCTAE.

If you have questions, please contact Alisha Hyslop (ahyslop@acteonline.org), ACTE's Director of Public Policy, or Kathryn Zekus (kzekus@careertech.org), Advance CTE's Senior Associate, Federal Policy.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Advance CTE  
AESA  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Federation of Teachers  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Association for College Admission Counseling  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)  
National Coalition for Literacy  
National Council for Workforce Education  
National Education Association  
National Immigration Forum  
National Rural Education Association  
National School Boards Association  
National Skills Coalition  
SkillsUSA  
Society of Women Engineers  
The Society for Maintenance and Reliability Professionals (SMRP)  
UnidosUS  
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges  
World Education Services (WES)

CC: Secretary Betsy DeVos, *Department of Education*  
Chairman Thad Cochran, *Senate Appropriations Committee*  
Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, *Senate Appropriations Committee*  
Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen, *House Appropriations Committee*  
Ranking Member Nita Lowey, *House Appropriations Committee*  
Chairwoman Virginia Foxx, *House Committee on Education and the Workforce*  
Ranking Member Bobby Scott, *House Committee on Education and the Workforce*