



May 15, 2017

U.S. House of Representatives
Education and the Workforce Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to vote YES on the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 2353), to be marked up May 17. We applaud the Education and the Workforce Committee for producing a bipartisan bill that updates career and technical education (CTE) for schools and students across the country. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Legislative Report Card for the 115th Congress.

Federal support for CTE is vitally important. It helps ensure that all students, no matter what zip code they live in, have access to high-quality CTE programs and that states have the means to strengthen those programs. For secondary students, CTE provides engaging, relevant, and hands-on learning opportunities that lead to higher graduation rates and a range of postsecondary education and career options. For postsecondary students, CTE provides preparation for careers as well as opportunities to attain degrees and other credentials.

H.R. 2353 reflects many of NEA's key principles and recommendations to Congress for CTE reauthorization. Among them:

- **Involving educators in decision-making.** H.R. 2353 recognizes and includes educators in CTE planning and decision-making. This approach strengthens collaboration among the education, business, labor, employment, and economic sectors; improves program effectiveness; and helps ensure that the needs of both students and employers are met. Including CTE educators in decision-making at many levels is further insurance that CTE students' needs are well-represented.
- **Preparing educators to address the needs of all students.** Excellent CTE programs that meet students' needs require a strong pipeline of quality, credentialed, and experienced educators. We appreciate that the bill addresses the need for CTE instructors to receive appropriate training in pedagogical practices, including professional development geared to serving under-represented students — specifically, English-language learners and students with special needs. We also appreciate that the bill provides for early exploration of CTE programs, including support and counseling to help middle school students understand a variety of career possibilities and pathways for getting there.

- **Addressing skills gaps.** Education and training supported by career and technical education programs are vital to addressing gaps in workers' skills and employers' needs. Employers across the nation continue to stress the need for well-trained workers. H.R. 2353 seeks to align CTE programs and in-demand industries while allowing local programs flexibility to address local labor market needs. The bill further highlights the importance of employability skills to student success.

We thank the Committee for taking a bipartisan approach to CTE reauthorization and urge you to vote YES on H.R. 2353.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association