



May 16, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the over 170,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), **I write to express our deep concerns with the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 2353)* for the roll back of federal authority and lack of civil rights protections critical to improving opportunities for women and minorities.** While we applaud the bipartisan effort to address this critical reauthorization, the lack of attention towards accountability and closing gaps in participation and achievement between special populations, most specifically gender, must be addressed. Our comments today build on our September 13, 2016 letter [opposing](#) last year's legislation.

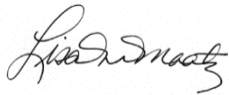
The Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006 is one of the most important pieces of federal legislation supporting career readiness for secondary and community college students nationwide. As the United States continues to compete in the global economy, the development of a highly qualified technical workforce to meet the needs of business is critical. Under current law, the Perkins Act takes critical steps to educate, train and support underrepresented individuals for success in the workforce, including nontraditional occupations and women's entrepreneurship. The law includes key gender equity provisions intended to increase the number of women, minorities, and special populations in nontraditional careers. Access to CTE for all students is critical to ensuring that the U.S. stays competitive in the global economy, to closing the skills gap and to providing access to high skill, high wage occupations that lead to a family sustaining wage. Despite these efforts, AAUW is concerned about the rollback of state accountability outlined in the current bill.

AAUW is deeply concerned with the reduction of accountability regarding negotiated target setting and federal sanctioning authority. The current Perkins law requires that federally funded institutions negotiate goals to promote gender equity and are held accountable for participation and completion rates in programs non-traditional to a students' gender. Under the current bill, states would set their own goals for participation and completion without input from the U.S. Department of Education. The Department of Education lacks sufficient authority to ensure states are held accountable when they fail to meet goals. Specifically, the current bill removes the U.S. Department of Education's explicit authority to impose final sanctions, eliminating any ability to correct the situation beyond state-written improvement plans. These changes represent a significant rollback of accountability from current law. We urge you to consider the ramifications these actions will have particularly on women, minorities, and special populations, especially given recent actions in Congress that include the repeal of regulations promulgated to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The bill in its current form is a flawed compromise in need of improvement. Without robust program accountability for both students' opportunities and outcomes, the otherwise positive changes to the Perkins program will have limited effect. As the committee process moves forward, these concerns must be addressed.

AAUW urges members to support the Bonamici/Polis Amendment to H.R. 2353. Reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act should modernize and build on the nation's career and technical education programs and preserve the secretarial authority needed to ensure programs are of high quality and effectively serve students, especially those facing the greatest barriers. Members should support any amendments that would effectively address these critical provisions and ensure states are held accountable for closing gaps in participation and achievement between special populations. **Failure to address these changes during markup could result in AAUW's opposition to the bill.**

We look forward to working with you to ensure we can accurately and appropriately evaluate career and technical education programs while holding institutions accountable. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 115th Congress*. If you need additional information, feel free to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Pam Yuen at 202/785-7712.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa M. Maatz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" being the most prominent.

Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President of Government Relations and Advocacy