

April 19, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Leahy:

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 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*
Chairman Lamar Alexander, *Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee*
Ranking Member Patty Murray, *Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee*