



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

October 28, 2015

The Honorable Mike Enzi
The Honorable Robert Casey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Enzi and Casey:

We write on behalf of the Education Taskforce of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) which advocates on behalf of the 6.5 million school-age students with disabilities attending public school across the nation. As you begin the important work to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Act (The Act) we thank you for the opportunity to participate in the process and wish to first share some helpful data that we believe supports the need to more fully include and support students with disabilities. Key data show that:

- 19.1% of people with disabilities are participating in the U.S. Labor force as compared to 68.2% of people without disabilities.ⁱ
- 10.4% of people with disabilities are unemployed as compared to 4.7% of people without disabilities.ⁱⁱ
- High school students with disabilities who participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are *nine times more likely* to become employed. Work-based learning promotes essential skills such as: problem solving, creative thinking, teamwork and social relationships.ⁱⁱⁱ

To help improve the outcomes of individuals with disabilities and support the positive transition to career training and/or postsecondary education that can begin as early as middle school, the CCD urges you to consider our key overarching principles as a guide to your work in the coming months. They are:

- Ensure The Act affirmatively and consistently acknowledges, includes, and supports students with disabilities as a Special Population to be provided CTE services. This should begin with the Purposes statement, extend to any Findings, and be carried out in supporting authorizing provisions throughout the law.
- Promote only provisions that support and reinforce full inclusion, participation and reporting on the outcomes of students with disabilities in middle- and high-school and post-secondary programs funded by The Act.
- Ensure authorizing levels appropriately support the important outreach to students and dissemination of information to students and parents on the opportunities available to them through CTE, including through the Parental Assistance and Local Family Information Centers authorized in The Act.
- Include provisions to update and specifically align The Act with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), especially as it relates to reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to access CTE services in the least restrictive environment.

- Include provisions to update and specifically align The Act with the Workforce Innovation Opportunity and Improvement Act (WIOA), especially as it relates to promoting competitive, integrated employment (CIE).
- Emphasize and incentivize schools to begin transition planning for students with disabilities to ensure students gain CTE experience through simulations, internships, apprenticeships and other evidence-based programs that employers, postsecondary and career programs can demonstrate lead to meaningful outcomes including CIE.
- Include special education, general education teachers and specialized instructional support personnel in any/all professional development to provide the knowledge and skills teachers need.
- Assure all pre-service and in-service CTE professional development programs for any personnel involved in the direct delivery of educational services also includes training in designing and implementing accommodations and modifications [as appropriate] for students with disabilities, including the use of the principles of universal design for learning as defined in the Higher Education Act.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with you as the reauthorization moves forward.

Sincerely,

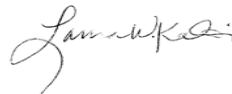


Eileen Dombrowski
Easter Seals



Lindsay Jones
National Center for Learning Disabilities

/Kim Musheno/
Kim Musheno
Association of University Centers for Disability



Laura Kaloi
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates



Cindy Smith
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For additional information, visit www.c-c-d.org.

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Patty Murray

ⁱ U.S. Department of Labor, 2015 retrieved at www.dol.gov

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Allen, Peg; Ciancio, Jean et al., 2008, retrieved at: <https://www.questia.com/read/1G1-186320600/transitioning-students-with-disabilities-into-work>