

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman, Committee of  
Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Ranking Member, Committee of  
Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

On behalf of the Construction Employers of America (CEA) and the 15,000 signatory contractors and 1.4 million employees we represent, we write today respectfully requesting your support of proposed Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Education Appropriations Report Language regarding college apprenticeship programs. The proposed report language is:

Provided further, that section 3(20) of the Perkins Act shall be applied as if the term “eligible institution” includes a public or nonprofit apprenticeship program that is registered with the Office of Apprenticeship of the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor or a State apprenticeship agency recognized by the Office of Apprenticeship pursuant to the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663) and accredited by an agency recognized by the Secretary of Education.

The CEA is made up of seven employer associations that represent construction firms that utilize union craftworkers. We understand the critical role quality, accredited apprenticeship programs play in ensuring there is a robust, highly trained workforce to meet the construction needs that drive our economy and which will employ the next generation of builders and contractors. Our organizations independently finance 1,000 apprentice training centers across the country. With over 100,000 future construction workers currently enrolled in our apprenticeship programs, we are creating a path to prosperity for blue collar workers that are the backbone of America. We have invested significantly in apprenticeship programs, even providing paid “on the job” instruction for our apprentices. Quality apprenticeship programs are vital to the continued growth and success of the construction and specialty trade industries.

The proposed report language would allow our 16 college apprenticeship programs with nine in candidacy to receive federal Perkins Funding. These apprenticeship programs are accredited by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). This accreditation allows our apprentices the opportunity to receive an associate and/or bachelor's degree if they are inclined to pursue higher education.

Despite this accreditation, we are not able to receive Perkins Funding for our college apprenticeship programs. If we could, this funding would go directly to our apprenticeship training centers, their staff, curriculum, tools, and equipment, etc. This funding would not be available to our apprentices as we provide the funding for their apprentice training.

For the past two years, the House adopted report language noted below and we are proposing slightly similar FY24 language. This proposed language was included in the House FY22 and FY23 Appropriations Bills, but unfortunately, was not included in the final budgets for those years. Please bear in mind, we are not seeking any additional funds with this language, we are simply requesting access to the existing Perkins funds, which should be available to our college apprenticeship programs.

Previous House adopted language:

The House report language in H. R. 4502[Report No. 117–96], which would do the following:

"Provided further, That section 3(20) of the Perkins Act shall be applied as if the term “eligible institution” includes an apprenticeship program that is registered under the National Apprenticeship Act and accredited by an agency recognized by the Secretary of Education." This language would allow accredited apprenticeship centers the opportunity to receive Perkins Act Funding for staffing, curriculum development, etc...

Over the last several years, we have been working with the DOE to allow registered, accredited apprenticeship programs to receive Perkins funding. Under the Perkins authorizing language (Perkins V, Section 20), eligible institutions are:

Eligible Institutions Subparagraph (B). A registered apprenticeship is " a non-profit private institution" that "offers... career and technical education courses that lead to technical skill proficiency or a recognized postsecondary credential..."

Though this authorizing language does exist, we believe it needs to be modified to allow the accredited college apprenticeships schools have access to these funds from their state Departments of Education. DOE specifically praises apprenticeships as being one of the ways to further enhance career and technical education; thereby, it seems inconsistent in intent to systemically exclude from Perkins funding college apprenticeship programs, which are themselves recognized as a peer institution by other accredited centers of higher learning.

We respectfully request your support of this proposed FY24 Education Appropriations Report Language regarding college apprenticeship programs. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. Thank you for your attention regarding this important matter.

Respectfully,

The Construction Employers of America

[www.constructionemployersofamerica.com](http://www.constructionemployersofamerica.com)

FCA International

International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers

Mechanical Contractors Association of America

National Electrical Contractors Association

Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association

Signatory Wall and Ceiling Contractors Alliance

The Association of Union Constructors