

NCWGE NATIONAL COALITION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EDUCATION

May 11, 2004

The Honorable John A. Boehner
The Honorable George Miller
The Honorable Michael Castle
The Honorable Lynn Woolsey
House Education and the Workforce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Perkins Reauthorization

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), we are writing to urge you to strengthen provisions in the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act for displaced homemakers, single parents and individuals training for nontraditional employment – the majority of whom are women and girls. NCWGE is a nonprofit organization of more than 50 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities for girls and women. Our mission is to provide leadership in and advocate for the development of national education policies that benefit all women and girls.

The career and technical education system holds great promise for providing individuals with the skills they need to attain self-sufficient wages. However, current law is falling short of that goal. The 1998 reauthorization of Perkins law (Perkins III) eliminated vital funding to programs providing education and training services to women and girls. A 2001 survey of these programs, *Invisible Again: The Impact of Changes in Federal Funding on Vocational Programs for Women and Girls*, found:

- **Funding Slashed**
Over 50% of programs serving special populations and women and girls preparing for nontraditional occupations reported that their funding had decreased since Perkins III took effect, and they predicted additional funding cuts in the future
- **Services to Students Significantly Decreased**
71% of programs serving special populations and women and girls preparing for nontraditional occupations reported that their capacity to provide services to their clientele had decreased. Nearly one-third reported “severe” decreases.
- **Declining Support from State and Local Educational Agencies**
Around one-third of programs reported decreased state and local agency support for programs and services to support single-parent students, displaced homemaker students, or students studying for nontraditional occupations since Perkins III came into effect.

- **Insufficient Access to Training**

65% of programs serving special populations and women and girls preparing for nontraditional occupations believe that access to training in their area is insufficient to meet students' needs.

- **Workforce Investment Act Failing to Meet Needs of Students Training for Nontraditional Occupations**

92% of programs reported that state or local Workforce Investment agencies were not providing sufficient financial support, policy direction, or leadership to support programs and services to recruit and train female students for nontraditional occupations.

In addition, severe gender segregation is widespread among our nation's career and technical education classrooms. A study by the National Women's Law Center found that in high schools nationwide female students make up 96% of the students enrolled in cosmetology, 87% of the students enrolled in child care courses, and 86% of the students enrolled in health care classes. Male students comprise 94% of students enrolled in plumbing and electrician programs, 93% of the students in welding and carpentry programs, and 92% of the students enrolled in automotive technology.

To fulfill its promise of providing quality education to all students Perkins Act reauthorization must include:

- Programs and services must be available to women and girls that will enable them to achieve high wage/high skill and nontraditional employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- Career guidance and counseling must be provided to all students and delivered in a fair manner that ensures students are receiving information necessary to lead to high skill/high wage and nontraditional careers.
- Professional development and training must be provided to administrators, counselors, and teachers to ensure that sex-bias in career and technical education is eliminated.
- National Perkins activities must support research on the outcomes for women and girls in career and technical education.
- Accountability and disaggregated student data collection must be the cornerstone for planning and funding decisions at both the state and local level.
- Federal agencies must coordinate their enforcement and implementation of education and job training laws (while maintaining the integrity of the laws and their individual funding streams) to best meet the needs of women and girls seeking career and technical education.

We urge you to develop Perkins legislation that will strengthen our nation's workforce by improving women's, girls', and displaced homemakers' access to career and technical education. For a list of the over 50 member organizations of NCWGE, please visit our website at www.ncwge.org. Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Jill Miller, CEO of Women Work! and Chair of NCWGE's Vocational Education and Workforce Training Task Force, at (202)467-6346.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
NCWGE Chair

Jocelyn Samuels
NCWGE Vice-Chair

Jill Miller
Chair, Vocational Education
and Workforce Training Task
Force

Enclosures

Cc: Congressman Cass Ballenger
Congresswoman Judy Biggert
Congressman Timothy Bishop
Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn
Congressman Max Burns
Congressman John Carter
Congressman Ed Case
Congressman Tom Cole
Congressman Danny Davis
Congresswoman Susan Davis
Congressman Jim DeMint
Congressman Vern Ehlers
Congressman Phil Gingrey
Congressman Jim Greenwood
Congressman Raúl Grijalva
Congressman Ruben Hinojosa
Congressman Pete Hoekstra
Congressman Rush Holt
Congressman Johnny Isakson
Congressman Sam Johnson
Congressman Ric Keller
Congressman Dale Kildee
Congressman Ron Kind
Congressman John Kline
Congressman Dennis Kucinich
Congresswoman Denise Majette
Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy
Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Congressman Buck McKeon
Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave
Congressman Charlie Norwood
Congressman Tom Osborne
Congressman Major R. Owens
Congressman Donald Payne
Congressman Tom Petri
Congressman Todd Platts

Congressman Jon Porter
Congressman Timothy Ryan
Congressman Patrick Tiberi
Congressman John Tierney
Congressman Fred Upton
Congressman Chris Van Hollen
Congressman Joe Wilson
Congressman David Wu

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Member Organizations

Academy for Educational Development
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of University Women
American Civil Liberties Union
American Council on Education
American Educational Research Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education
Association for Women in Science
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.
Association of Teacher Educators
Business & Professional Women USA
Center for Advancement of Public Policy
Center for Women's Policy Studies
Council of Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Educational Equity
Dads and Daughters
Equal Rights Advocates
Federation of Organizations for Professional Women
Feminist Majority Foundation
Gallaudet University, Women's Basketball Coach
Girl Scouts of the USA
Girls Count
Girls Incorporated
Girlstart
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Ms. Foundation for Women
Myra Sadker Advocates for Gender Equity
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Association for Girls & Women in Sport
National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Administrative Women in Education
National Council of Negro Women
National Education Association
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's History Project
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, Legal Momentum
Parent and Teacher Association
Partners of the Americas
U. S. Student Association
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women Work!
Women's Edge
Women's Research and Education Institute
Women's Sports Foundation
Young Women's Christian Association