



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
(202) 224-6770

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***HOUSE PASSES PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ACT TO MEET NEEDS OF THE 21st CENTURY WORKFORCE***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today applauded the House of Representatives for approving the conference agreement on the “Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act,” S.250, a bill he said will “help close the gap that threatens America’s long-term competitiveness by addressing the needs of the nation’s changing workforce.” The Senate approved the report Wednesday, and the House approved it early Saturday morning before adjourning. The bill now awaits the President’s signature.

“Just as business and industry have recast production techniques and redesigned products to change with the developing economy, the nation needs to recast the methods used to educate and train tomorrow’s workforce,” Enzi said.

“This bill will help support lifelong learning opportunities for students to gain technical skills and knowledge that will help them find and hold a high skill, high wage job,” Enzi said. “For others, participation in these programs can mean the difference between jobs with no possibility of advancement and a successful career.”

The Perkins Act provides more than \$1.2 billion in federal support for career and technical education programs in all 50 States. It also reauthorizes federal career and technical education programs which were last reauthorized in 1998.

“The American economy is in the midst of a skills revolution, making a quality education more important than ever,” Enzi said. “Sixty percent of jobs created in the next decade will require skills that only 20 percent of today’s workers possess. The Perkins Act is a critical piece of a comprehensive system of education and training programs to prepare America’s students and workers for the economy of the 21st century.”

“I want to thank my colleagues for their willingness to work toward agreement on many of the issues we’ve dealt with over the past fifteen months. I applaud the work of House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman, Representative Howard P.

“Buck” McKeon (R-CA), HELP Committee Ranking Member, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member, Representative George Miller (D-CA) for moving this vital issue forward, and I am proud to present this bill to the President for his signature.”

S. 250 will improve programs authorized under the Perkins Act by requiring:

- **A More Effective Accountability System** - that aligns accountability requirements with other federal education and training programs;
- **Stronger Links to Businesses** - that build stronger partnerships between high schools, colleges, and businesses, so they can better meet the needs of the workforce, including small businesses;
- **Better Links from High School to College** - that require states to outline a logical sequence of courses, including high school and college courses, that will lead to an industry recognized credential, certificate, or postsecondary degree;
- **Stronger Academic Focus** - that promotes an enhanced emphasis on academic instruction for federally supported career and technical education programs consistent with other federal education programs such as “No Child Left Behind.”

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