



Summary of 2021 WLTI Congressional Visits

Legislative visits on Sept. 21, 2021:

SkillsUSA members visited eight senators and 26 representatives and U.S. Labor Secretary Walsh for a total of 35 visits.

The following reports were submitted by students attending the 2021 WLTI:

ALABAMA

Sen. Tuberville — Met with Sen. Tommy Tuberville. He was very interested in career and technical education since he was due to have an education committee meeting soon. We shared our experiences with CTE and how CTE has changed our lives. We also talked about the skills gap and the need for skilled laborers. We asked him to encourage other senators and representatives to support Perkins funding. He supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

Sen. Shelby — Met with Rep. Richard Shelby at 10:30 a.m. He was very intelligent and supportive. We asked that he continue to support CTE and join the CTE Caucus. He said he thinks that CTE is an important part of a student's life.

Rep. Carl — Met with Rep. Jerry Carl at 10:15 a.m. He was the nicest representative we met with that day. We discussed why we need more focus on CTE funding and how it can make a difference with the skills gap and prepare future workers for their jobs. Rep. Carl supports SkillsUSA and CTE but is not on the CTE Caucus. Rep. Carl grew up doing hands-on jobs and he supports the push for increased funding via Perkins for Alabama schools.

Rep. Aderholt — Met with Rep. Aderholt at 11:30 a.m. He was very nice and motivational. We discussed Perkins funding, how to increase it and why we should increase it. Rep. Aderholt is a part of the CTE Caucus.

ARIZONA

Rep. Raul Grijalva; Rep. Debbie Lesko and Rep. Greg Stanton — During a virtual visit with our entire delegation of 10 advisors and 117 students at 10 a.m., students presented to Christine Hirst Bernhardt, legislative assistant to Rep. Raul Grijalva; Johnny Zwaanstra, legislative assistant to Rep. Debbie Lesko; and Jennifer Arnold, legislative assistant to Rep. Greg Stanton. The virtual presentation was live streamed from the ballroom of the Hilton hotel and was led by six students from our Arizona high schools in attendance, along with our SkillsUSA Arizona state president. It was followed by a question-and-answer session. The students shared their personal experiences of how career and technical education and SkillsUSA added value to their personal and professional lives. The students advocated for continued funding and support for CTE programs nationwide and learned from the legislatives on how best they could continue to be a champion for CTE. They invited the three representatives to attend their SLSC, April 19-20, 2022. All three supported the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Rep. Grijalva is a member of the CTE Caucus.

COLORADO

Rep. Pearlmutter — Met with Tia Bogeljic at 1:30 p.m. The aide was very enthusiastic about education and CTE and had a lot of knowledge about CTE, Perkins and SkillsUSA. We explained SkillsUSA and connected SkillsUSA to Colorado's statewide goal of providing work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for all students. We shared a framework story and our gratitude for the congressman's support of CTE. We asked he continue to support Perkins funding and if he would join the CTE Caucus. The representative supports education, Perkins funding, SkillsUSA and CTE.

Rep. Neguse — Met with Abbie Callahan at 11:30 a.m. The congressman didn't previously have a focus on CTE or education, so the meeting was beneficial. We explained CTE and SkillsUSA; our Colorado state goal around work-based learning (WBL); shared a Framework story related to how Perkins funding supports WBL opportunities from students of all backgrounds, and the benefits of CTE and WBL. We encouraged the congressman to join the CTE caucus and support Perkins funding.

Rep. Crow — Met with Mackenzie Fallt at 10:30 a.m. Mackenzie met with the two Colorado state officers. Rep. Jason Crow is on the CTE Caucus and supports CTE legislation, so the aide was enthusiastic to meet with us. We talked about CTE and SkillsUSA, presented a framework story about the impact of work-based learning (WBL) and school-based enterprise experiences and Colorado's state-wide goal to increase WBL opportunities to all students this year. We encouraged them to continue supporting CTE and SkillsUSA and we invited him to speak at our SLSC in April.

GEORGIA

Sen. Warnock — Met with Taylor Ware at 11:00 a.m. Taylor said that Sen. Warnock is a big supporter of CTE and is looking for opportunities to be more involved. We shared our Framework stories of how CTE and Perkins V have benefitted us. We asked if he would consider joining the CTE Caucus and invited Sen. Warnock to visit our college campus.

Rep. Allen — Met with Rep. Rick Allen virtually. We discussed the SkillsUSA Framework and the importance of CTE and Perkins funding. We shared how CTE and Perkins V have benefitted us, as well as the remaining 79,798 technical college students in Colorado seeking to learn a skilled trade. Rep. Allen supports SkillsUSA and CTE and he is a member of the CTE Caucus. He visited with WLTG groups in 2019 as well. We invited him to visit our schools in the future.

Rep. Hill — Met with Rep. Rick Hill at 11:45 a.m. Rep. Hill is a huge CTE advocate. We shared our Framework stories and how important CTE and Perkins V is for us as well as for all the technical college students in the state of Georgia. We shared how SkillsUSA has made a positive impact in helping to bridge the skills gap. We asked for his continued support and invited him to come to our campus.

INDIANA

Rep. Hollingsworth — Met with Rep. Trey Hollingsworth at 12 p.m. He sat on his desk and was very informal, which caught us off-guard. He was very excited about meeting the group and talking about CTE. He had just visited a school where one of our state officers is enrolled, so the team really opened up to him. It was more of a question-and-answer session versus a presentation by us. We gave school-specific data and the importance of continuing to grow programs and why funding is needed. We asked for his support of and increased funding for Perkins. We invited him to our state conference in April. He was very excited to learn about SkillsUSA and how he could help.

Rep. Mrvan — Met with Sydney Young at 10 a.m. The visit was virtual and lasted about 15 minutes. We spoke about CTE and its importance and how funding needs to be increased. We talked about SkillsUSA and gave specific school statistics because two of our state officers are in his district. Rep. Frank Mrvan is on the Labor and Education Committee and supports CTE. He is a big union supporter in northwest Indiana (steel mills and manufacturing).

MAINE

Sen. Collins — Met with Trevor Hustus and Rep. Susan Collins at 12:15 p.m. The communication process with Sen. Susan Collins and her staff was delightful. We had an in-person meeting that led into a tour of the Capitol building. We talked about how CTE has

helped us and made us succeed. She supports CTE and Perkins and she mentioned that she wishes she was had the opportunity to attend a CTE school when she was our age.

MASSACHUSETTS

Sen. Warren — Met with Sara Kugler at 9:30 a.m. We had a productive meeting with the Senator's office. We spoke about funding through Perkins as well as the college debt crisis. We also talked about our personal experiences with SkillsUSA and our concerns about the workforce of tomorrow. We asked for the senator to join the senate CTE Caucus. Senator Warren is an advocate for CTE.

U.S. Labor Secretary Walsh — Met with Secretary Martin Walsh and his aide Angela Hanks at 11 a.m. We had a productive visit and think our ideas will make a difference. We discussed our experiences in SkillsUSA and CTE. We discussed funding for CTE programs, career planning guidance and the workforce of tomorrow.

MICHIGAN

Rep. Moolenaar — Met with him at 1 p.m. He was easy to talk to and we all enjoyed our visit. All three state officers shared their Framework stories. He supports CTE.

MISSOURI

Rep. Luetkemeyer — Met him at 2:30 p.m. The visit went very well. He was very engaging and seemed to care a lot about what was being said and could personally relate. Everyone in the room had a chance to speak multiple times and a lot of questions were asked. We talked about Perkins needing more support, how our economy needs help right now, and how we need help with the labor shortage. He is already on the CTE Caucus.

Rep. Long — Met with him at 1:30 p.m. Rep. Long led the meeting and gave each of us one turn to speak. We said it is important to continue to get funding as it allows us to accommodate for the ever-evolving equipment for the students. We planned to highlight how important it is to receive funding that specifically caters to improving the quality for CTE programs.

Rep. Hawley — Met with Chad Johnson at 11:30 a.m. The visit went well. We shared success stories that have come from Perkins funding. Rep. Hawley is an advocate and has worked on passing two bills that were to grant more accessibility to training and certificate programs.

Rep. Wagner — met with Holly Joseph at 10 a.m. It was a virtual meeting. We shared our points and she asked good questions. We talked about the skills gap, about the good things funding has done for us and how to continue supporting CTE schools. She said their office will support CTE.

NEW MEXICO

Sen. Lujan — Met with Purdy Montesinos and Alamna Jua at 12 p.m. The Senator was not there. We covered CTE, Perkins and our experiences with SkillsUSA. The meeting was held via Zoom. Senator Lujan's assistants said he is passionate about helping the future generation.

Rep. Harrel — Met with Casey Conley at 10:10 a.m. The meeting went well and she made us feel at ease. We talked about CTE, SkillsUSA and Perkins. She said she would like to be a guest speaker for our CTE programs.

NEW YORK

Rep. Tenney — Met with Steve Hansen and George Iverson at 11 a.m. The meeting started with the aides and Rep. Tenney joined later. We discussed the benefits of CTE and how it can positively impact the lives and careers of students. We described the skills gap and how CTE helps to close it; the variety of CTE courses available; the benefits of CTE for students; and the opportunity for Rep. Tenney to support CTE further by joining the CTE Caucus. Rep. Tenney was very receptive to our request for support and said she would investigate and consider joining the CTE Caucus.

RHODE ISLAND

Rep. Langevin — Met with Rep. Langevin and Nick Pennington at 11 a.m. The Burrillville high school students and the Coventry high school students met Rep. Langevin in person. He was enthusiastic about what we had to say and related to many of things we brought up. We discussed the lack of up-to-date equipment in many of our schools and how that prevented students from being able to properly apply the skills they are learning. We asked him for more funding to help our schools. He is a big supporter of CTE and was very interested and engaged in the meeting. He gave his undivided attention to whoever was speaking at the moment. When our meeting ended, he started discussing the things that needed to be done to solve many of the issues we brought up at the meeting.

Rep. Cicilline — Met with Rep. Cicilline and Carrick Heilferty at 11:30 a.m. Rep. Cicilline showed his passion for CTE by listening attentively to one of the student's Framework story and relating it to himself. He made a comment on the red blazers, saying they made us look professional. We talked about how the CTE system is flawed in some respects. Rep. Cicilline told us that he had been a major for the state of Rhode Island and how he helped build Providence Career and Technical Academy located in Providence. He said he built this school because he wanted to showcase the importance of CTE around the state.

TENNESSEE

Rep. Rose — Met with him at 12 p.m. Rep. Rose was very enthusiastic and interactive. He is supporter of Perkins and CTE and he was a former member of FFA. The visit was exciting and helpful. We talked about the skills gap, gave a student and advisor's experience of SkillsUSA and shared a teacher's perspective of the skills gap. Rep. Rose talked about his support for CTE and Perkins and explained how FFA impacted his life and how he believes all students should have that opportunity.

Rep. Hagerty — Met with Matt Apple and Natalie McIntyre at 1:30 p.m. We discussed Perkins funding, the skills gap and Framework stories. The Tennessee president gave his Framework story, the Tennessee vice president talked about CTE and SkillsUSA, the Tennessee parliamentarian introduced some facts about the skills gap and the impact, the chapter advisor/teacher gave a viewpoint of the impact of Perkins in the classroom and the state officer coach talked about the impact from both a state officer and state officer coach's viewpoint.

TEXAS

Sen. Cruz — Met with him at 11:30 a.m. We addressed the need for Perkins funding for our local school districts. We also discussed the way funds are being distributed. Sen. Cruz made the commitment to support the future funding for CTE programs.

Rep. Allred — Met with Rep. Allred and Whitney O'Neal at 10:45 a.m. The visit went very smoothly. Everyone had a part and everyone did their job. We shared our personal experiences about CTE to connect with him. We asked for support for SkillsUSA and CTE. He said he is already a big supporter of education and CTE and believes in giving the people the opportunity to learn essential job skills.

Rep. Pfluger — Met with two staff members first and then we moved the meeting to Rep. Fluger's office where we continued the conversation with him at 10 a.m. We discussed the need for continued support for funding CTE programs at the middle school and high school levels. He was very knowledgeable about what has been done this year and looks forward to what will take place in the next session. He didn't know much about SkillsUSA so we told him about how vital it is to students in CTE programs.

Rep. Crenshaw — Met with him at 2:30 p.m. We talked about CTE and Perkins and asked him to support SkillsUSA. Rep. Crenshaw said he supports vocational education.

Rep. Gonzales — Met with him at 12:30 p.m. He is very informed about funding needs and the skills gap in America and in his district. We talked about the skills gap and the need for more career and technical training in schools. He said he would advocate for future funding and support of CTE programs.

WYOMING

Sen. Lummis — Met with her at 10 a.m. We had a wonderful conversation in her conference room in-person. We discussed ways that our government at both the state and federal levels can effectively change the traditional education pathway focus and support the conversations that encourage students to explore their options and ultimately choose their pathway that leads to success, whether that takes the form of a four-year degree, a two-year degree, a certification or going into the military. She suggested routes to take at the state level and relationships to develop. She also spoke of community college developments at the federal level.

Sen. Barrasso — Met with him at 10:30 a.m. He seemed to think of CTE as an alternative to a four-year degree. We spoke casually about his office and Capitol Hill. We then discussed ways that our government at both the state and federal levels can effectively change the traditional education pathway focus and support the conversations that encourage students to explore their options and ultimately choose a pathway that leads to success, whether that takes the form of a four-year degree, a two-year degree, a certification or going into the military. He supports CTE, but it did not appear to be a top priority of his.

Rep. Cheney — Met with her at 11 a.m. The meeting was amazing, informative, casual and relaxed. We discussed ways that our government at both the state and federal levels can effectively change the traditional education pathway focus and support the conversations that encourage students to explore their options and ultimately choose their pathway that leads to success, whether that takes the form of a four-year degree, a two-year degree, a certification or going into the military. We stayed in her office quite a bit longer than we were scheduled. She talked to us about the Jan. 6 incidents at the U.S. Capitol, CTE, government education support at the high school level, Wyoming as a whole and how it relates to CTE via the Hathaway Scholarships. It was the most productive and informative conversation of the day.