



## Summary of 2022 WLT I Congressional Visits

### **Legislative visits on Sept. 20, 2022:**

SkillsUSA members visited 15 senators and 47 representatives plus Associate Deputy Secretary of Labor Nikki McKinney for a total of 63 visits.

*The following reports were submitted by students attending the 2022 WLT I:*

### **ALABAMA**

**Rep. Rogers — Met with Ethan Pelissier and Rep. Mike Rogers.** Rep. Rogers had to leave early. Both support CTE and want to expand it. The visit was beneficial and helped us understand Perkins and how it helps us obtain financial support. We told our Framework stories and explained how they have helped prepare us for our future. We invited them to visit our state conference and Ethan seemed very interested. They were very impressed with how CTE and SkillsUSA has helped us.

### **ARIZONA**

**Sen. Kelly — Met with Katherine Phillips.** Excellent! Katherine greeted us and we engaged in conversation. Sen. Kelly stopped by for about 10 minutes. We covered Perkins and its impact on CTE. The senator is a big advocate for CTE.

**Sen. Sinema — met with Frank Smith.** The visit took place on Wednesday, Sept. 21. The students shared their role as state officers and the demographics their voices represent across the state of Arizona. They shared one of their Framework stories and their personal journeys in CTE. They shared how CTE has made an impact on their lives and how that impact is because of Perkins funding. The senator has and will continue to vote yes for Perkins.

**Rep. O'Halleran — Met with Kaitlin Hooker.** The visit went great. It lasted about 15 minutes. We asked for support of Perkins and to increase the budget. Three of us shared our Framework stories. Another student referenced the stories and talked about how we all have

similar stories. One student talked about the skills gap. Kaitlin told us they supported Perkins and that they will continue to support it.

**Rep. Kirkpatrick — Met with Lezah Richardson.** Our student stories focused on the multiple career paths offered in CTE programs along with the need to close the skills gap. We explained that we needed funding to increase student opportunity for stackable industry credentials and innovative programs. We asked for additional funding. Rep. Kirkpatrick is a past educator and sits on the Appropriations Committee, which makes her a good candidate to target with additional requests.

**Rep. Grijalva — Met with Zachary Carey.** We shared personal stories of how CTE classes give students a competitive edge. We talked about the importance of sustaining and adding to Perkins funding. We said that training a highly skilled workforce is vital to the economy and how lack of funding could impact especially rural areas. Zachary said he took CTE classes in high school.

**Rep. Gosar — Met with Nick Bell.** Each student spoke and had the opportunity to tell their stories. Rep. Gosar made an appearance. The students discussed the skills gap and explained the need for funding. Nick had little knowledge about CTE. He asked the students a lot of questions and was very impressed.

**Rep. Biggs — met with Matt Ide.** The visit went great. We met in the café. Matt asked a few questions and said he would relay our concerns to Rep. Biggs. The meeting took 10 minutes. Our focus was to stress the importance of funding for CTE. We explained what Perkins is and gave our Framework stories. Matt said that Rep. Biggs supports education and CTE.

**Rep. Schweikert — met with Gabbi Sheitelman.** A student provided an introduction and asked for support for Perkins funding. A student connected Perkins funding to her CTE experience and how it prepared her to be a leader in the world of work. A student concluded by explaining both of his CTE programs and repeating the ask for support of Perkins. Gabbi said she didn't have any CTE or CTSO experience but discussed Rep. Schweikert's support of education initiatives previously.

**Rep. Lesko — met with Johnny Zwaanstra.** The visit went well. Each student was able to share their story and they asked for continuing support for Perkins funding. Rep. Lesko made an appearance. We advocated for Perkins funding and how important it is for CTE and how SkillsUSA is helping each student become leaders in today's world. Johnny said that Rep. Lesko has always supported SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Stanton — met with Jennifer Arnold.** The visit occurred virtually the week after WLTJ. Arizona met with all 11 of its congressional officials. Rep. Stanton supports CTE.

**Rep. Gallego — met with Jessica Pedroza.** Each student introduced themselves and shook hands. We delivered our Framework stories and discussed why our CTE program has been

so influential and beneficial for us. We discussed how important it is for CTE opportunities to be provided for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities. Jessica is a strong advocate for education, and she was a former teacher.

## **CALIFORNIA**

**Sen. Feinstein — met with legislative staff.** Since it was an unplanned visit, we talked to her legislative staff. We talked about the concept of CTE and handed them a folder with more information and some goodies. We shared the importance of CTE in schools in schools and the importance of funding. The staff seemed enthusiastic about CTE.

**Rep. Levin — met with Allie.** We gave her an intro to SkillsUSA and talked about the skills gap and CTE funding. We plan to follow up with Allie. She said Rep. Levin supports CTE and SkillsUSA and she believes that this is exactly what students need for a better future.

**Rep. Logfren — met with Iliana Sanchez.** The staffer was busy in an online meeting, so we couldn't talk to her. The scheduler gave us her business card. Our plan is to contact her by email.

**Rep. Torres — met with Justin.** We talked about CTE and he said he used to be a part of it. He said he understands that CTE can make a huge impact in someone's life. We discussed how SkillsUSA works and how Perkins works.

**Rep. Conway — met with Noah McKilligan.** Both Noah and Rep. Conway strongly support CTE. We talked about the skills gap and its implications on the workforce and the economy. We discussed our personal experiences in our CTE pathways and how SkillsUSA helps each individual student. We explained that Perkins helps at an individual, school and state level. They mentioned that if we would like their help, they are always available for us to reach out to. We invited them to the California state conference, and they showed some interest in attending.

**Rep. Steel — met with her assistant.** We talked about SkillsUSA and its benefits. We left a folder of information, and the assistant said she would relay it to the representative.

**Rep. Peters — met with Jackie Sobol.** She told us that Rep. Peters is a proud supporter of CTE classes. We asked for them to advocate for Perkins funding.

**Rep. Lee — met with Francisco Sabate.** We discussed the skills gap, CTE and Perkins. We gave our personal experiences and talked about the Framework and funding for Perkins. Rep. Lee supports CTE and the National Apprenticeship Act which is endorsed by Advance CTE.

**Rep. Garcia — met with Scott Watson.** We discussed the importance of CTE and its effect on the future workforce. Both he and Rep. Garcia support CTE. Scott already had a strong understanding of CTE and its importance. We talked about the skills gap and its implications on the workforce and economy. We proposed CTE and SkillsUSA as the solution. We invited them to the California state conference.

**Rep. Costa — met with John Lynch.** Rep. Costa's district has the third largest SkillsUSA membership in California. We talked about Perkins funding, the SkillsUSA Framework, and our personal experiences and CTE programs. We asked for their support and invited them to attend the state conference in Ontario, Calif.

**Rep. Chu — met with Jenna Christiansen.** We met via Zoom and discussed what SkillsUSA means to us. She had lots of questions and said she supports CTE. She said she would relay the message to her boss and that she supports Perkins.

**Rep. Matsui — met with Sydney Dahiyat.** We talked about SkillsUSA, Perkins what the congresswoman could do to support CTE courses. We talked about why CTE is important to us. She was very supportive and said that what we were doing was very cool and that she was glad to see us taking the initiative.

**Rep. McNerney — met with him on the steps of the Capitol Building and took a picture.** He said he studied math and is a big supporter of education. He is on the Science, Space and Technology Committee. We talked about SkillsUSA and explained what a CTSO is. Our state officer told a compelling personal story about what she learned on her journey to becoming a national gold medalist. We asked him to support Perkins and its future reauthorization. He said he supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Padilla — met with a legislative staffer.** We gave the staffer a folder. We talked about CTE and shared our personal experiences. The staffer seemed enthusiastic about SkillsUSA.

**Rep. LaMalfa — met with Seth Enderson.** We introduced ourselves and gave a brief explanation about SkillsUSA. The discussion was short.

**Rep. Lieu — met with Leah Uhrig.** The visit lasted about 15 minutes. We talked about the importance of CTE, funding and our background in SkillsUSA. We discussed the skills gap and why we need funding and important real-life opportunities. She said the representative was a computer science student and his son is in robotics so he understands the importance of CTE.

**Rep. Porter — met with staff.** He seemed interested in what we had to say. We shared points about our CTE classes, mentioned the FY23 budget and expressed our hope for him to support an increase in Perkins funding.

**Rep. Garamendi — met with Jacob Jerningan.** We talked about our pathways, SkillsUSA, the Framework, Perkins and the skills gap. Rep. Garamendi is involved with the National Apprenticeship Act. They support CTE and were grateful that we came to discuss it.

**Rep. Eshoo — met with Blaike Bibbs.** We introduced ourselves and gave a brief explanation of SkillsUSA. The meeting was very short.

**Rep. Cardenas — met with Mariah Philips.** We shared our personal experiences with SkillsUSA and how it has helped us. We asked for Rep. Cardenas support for increased funding for Perkins and invited Mariah to our state conference.

**Rep. Harder — met with him and Kara Verma.** We met in front of the Capitol building. He spoke about the importance of education and listened to the state officers explain SkillsUSA and WLT. He said he would like to tour our programs in California. We talked about the growing skills gap and how our organization helps to bridge it. We discussed Perkins and the reauthorization and gave him our SkillsUSA information folder. Rep. Harder said very few people get a college degree in his district of San Joaquin County. He stated how important it is for students to get career-based training and said he supports CTE and its funding.

**Rep. Thompson — met with Eric Hoffman.** We talked about how Perkins funding is not sufficient when divided between the many schools in California. Eric supports SkillsUSA and CTE and was a part of CTE as a student.

**Rep. Swalwell — met with Sarah Shapiro.** We discussed the importance of CTE and gave specific examples of how Perkins helps students. Both she and the Rep. Swalwell support CTE. We discussed how SkillsUSA helps develop the essential elements, gave our own personal experiences and talked about how SkillsUSA helps with career exploration and preparation. At the end of the interview, Sarah offered each of internships at the office. It was clear that Sarah had a strong passion for CTE and mentioned that Rep. Swalwell supports Perkins and its reauthorization.

**Rep. Sanchez—met with Samuel Flores and Rachel Chasalow.** We talked about the skills gap and what we can do to prevent it from growing. We invited their office to the state conference. They support CTE and Perkins.

**Rep. DeSaulnier — met with Sarah Jackson.** We introduced ourselves and talked about CTE and SkillsUSA. We said that the current funding is still not enough to support our CTE classes. Sarah said that the representative is a big supporter of CTE.

**Rep. Sherman — met with Erin Byers and Emma Silver.** We talked about SkillsUSA and our experiences in CTE as girls in a male dominated field. We explained the framework and how it helps students to become career ready. We talked about how Perkins funding affects our CTE classes, and we talked about how CTE courses open new options for students who

are taught to go the traditional college Route from a young age. We asked them to visit our schools.

**Rep. Lowenthal — met with scheduler.** There was no one available to talk with us so we gave a brief explanation of SkillsUSA and how important it is to CTE.

## **GEORGIA**

**Sen. Warnock — met with Joe Herrbach.** We discussed SkillsUSA, Perkins funding and CTE. We explained that Perkins allows us to have the right equipment, train our instructors and belong to CTSOs like SkillsUSA. Joe explained that the senator has benefitted from Perkins personally and is a strong proponent of education.

**Sen. Ossoff — met with a staffer.** The staffer used to be a teacher, so she understood the need for educational funding. We discussed SkillsUSA, Perkins funding, equipment and training needs, the skills gap and our educational pathways. She was very engaged and excited to meet with us. She agreed there is a skills gap and was thrilled to hear that SkillsUSA is working to close the gap and create career ready workers.

**Rep. Hice — met with him.** We thanked him for his previous support of Perkins funding and asked for his continued support. We told him that SkillsUSA is a CTSO that is funded by Perkins. He was aware of SkillsUSA and said it is a great organization that helps develop leaders. He said that CTE is very important in the workforce and is essential for a strong economy.

## **INDIANA**

**Sen. Young — met with him.** We had a great visit. We talked about CTE, the skills gap and Perkins funding. He loved our presentation. He supports CTE and plans to continue to support Perkins funding.

**Sen. Braun — met with him.** After Sen. Braun spoke at the CTE rally he met with SkillsUSA Indiana and was very excited to learn about what we were doing. The state officer team explained Perkins funding, CTE and the skills gap. He said he supported everything.

**Rep. Hollingsworth — met with him.** We had a great time. The state officer team talked with him about CTE, Perkins funding and the skills gap. He supports Perkins funding.

**Rep. Baird — met with Tanner Brown and Lauryn Adams.** We talked about CTE, the skills gap and Perkins funding. They asked a lot of questions and were very interested. They said the representative supports Perkins funding.

## **KENTUCKY**

**Sen. McConnell — met with a staffer.** Each student shared their Framework. The state officers advocated for CTE, SkillsUSA, Perkins funding and improvements needed for Kentucky. We said if we could get more funding, we could update facilities and start new chapters. Sen. McConnell is a big supporter of the coal mines and blue- and white-collar careers.

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

**Associate Deputy Secretary of Labor Nikki McKinney.** We spoke about workforce development and SkillsUSA. We touched on the topic of the railroad union strike and the time it took to resolve the issue. We asked her to partner with SkillsUSA. She was very excited and said she would consider coming to the NLSC, along with Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh and Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie Sue. She supports CTE and gave us some examples where individuals are trained for employment.

## **MISSOURI**

**Sen. Blunt — met with Sean Boswell.** Sen. Blunt has been a strong supporter of CTE for many years. Each of the students spoke about our experiences with CTE and about the issues we face within our programs. We talked about the need for industry standard equipment, the quickly growing class sizes and the struggles of being women in a non-traditional field. We asked for continued support for CTE. Sen. Blunt signed the Senate appropriations bill last year. This bill helps fund the Career Pathways Initiative, youth workforce training and the Strengthening Community Colleges Initiative.

**Rep. Hartzler — met with her assistant.** We each spoke and talked about how CTE helps our technical career labs. We talked about how standards for certifications consistently change causing labs and classrooms to have to be upgraded. With an increase in funding, it would allow more students to take CTE classes which will then help the labor shortage.

**Rep. Luetkmeyer — met with Tanner and the representative.** Rep. Luetkmeyer was very attentive. He let everyone speak, asked questions and showed how much he cares about CTE and promised to continue to support it. We shared success stories. We also talked about how students that want to go into the trades are being turned away from programs because the programs can't afford the upgrades. The representative said he loves being able to hear the positives and negatives in our programs and he sees the need for CTE and SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Smith — met with Lauren Mazurek.** The state officers introduced themselves. We had a great discussion. She seemed very interested about women in nontraditional fields, the diversity of our backgrounds and programs and SkillsUSA. She actively took notes, and she was very conversational. We talked about how the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act supports all our trades. We each took different topics to focus on: women in nontraditional fields, the skills gap, turnovers/class sizes, up-to-date equipment, opportunities within CTE and SkillsUSA, workplace experiences, certifications,

quality of education/experienced teachers, and the different education options after high school. Rep. Smith supports CTE and is on the CTE Caucus.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

**Sen. Tillis — met with Andrew Nam.** We gave a Framework speech, shared info about SkillsUSA with supporting statistics and discussed the importance of Perkins funding for CTE and SkillsUSA. We talked about the importance of CTE and that membership in SkillsUSA changes lives. We asked for their continued support for Perkins and CTE. We asked them to visit the Apprenticeship NC contests at our State Fair in Raleigh in October and to attend the state conference in Greensboro in April.

**Rep. Rouser — met with Bubba White.** We gave a Framework speech, shared info about SkillsUSA with supporting statistics and discussed the importance of Perkins funding for CTE and SkillsUSA. We talked about the importance of CTE and that membership in SkillsUSA changes lives. We asked them to visit the Apprenticeship NC contests at our State Fair in Raleigh in October and to attend the state conference in Greensboro in April. Rep. Rouser supports CTE, Perkins and SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Hudson — met with Katie McNiffe.** We gave a Framework speech, shared info about SkillsUSA with supporting statistics and discussed the importance of Perkins funding for CTE and SkillsUSA. We talked about the importance of CTE and that membership in SkillsUSA changes lives. We asked for their continued support for Perkins and CTE. We asked them to visit the Apprenticeship NC contests at our State Fair in Raleigh in October and to attend the state conference in Greensboro in April. They said they can't make it to the State Fair.

## **RHODE ISLAND**

**Sen. Reed — met with him.** He had a meeting to attend so we couldn't talk with him long. We shared our Framework stories and told him how Perkins funding has helped our programs. He continues to support Perkins funding, CTE and SkillsUSA.

**Sen. Whitehouse — met with him.** We sat in his conference room and shared our Framework stories. Sen. Whitehouse supports SkillsUSA and CTE and knows that skilled students are our future.

**Rep. Cicilline — met with him.** We met outside the Capitol building on the stairs. We shared our Framework stories and Rep. Cicilline asked us questions about our programs and how Perkins helps us. He said he supports Perkins, SkillsUSA and CTE.

## **TENNESSEE**



**Sen. Blackburn — met with Alexander Gonzales.** The state officer team spoke with Alexander about funding for CTE classes in Tennessee and provided insight using our Framework stories and our personal examples. Alexander said Sen. Blackburn is fully supportive of our initiatives.

**Rep. Burchett — met with Michael Grider.** We talked about the importance of CTE and SkillsUSA and the need for TCAT in Knoxville to be able to expand. Rep. Burchett brings his cars to our campus to be worked on by our automotive program. He was also at the ribbon cutting for our new campus that opened in December.

## **WYOMING**

**Sen. Lummis — met with a staffer.** We were given a private tour of the Capitol and he took us out for coffee between meetings. The experience for the students was memorable, inspiring and very positive. The officer team opened with an immediate request for continued support for CTE and Perkins reauthorization. Each officer played an important role in articulating who we are, what we do and shared personal experiences around CTE SkillsUSA and their leadership experiences.

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