



Summary of 2023 WLTI Congressional Visits

Legislative visits on Sept. 26, 2023:

SkillsUSA members visited 12 senators and 65 representatives plus Deputy Under Secretary Gloria Montaño Greene, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Deputy Assistant Secretary Luke Rhine and Chief of Staff DeAndre Jones, U.S. Department of Education; Senior Transportation Specialist Alexander Sinclair, U.S. Department of Transportation; Deputy Advisor Conor Freeley and Senior Advisor to the Labor Secretary Christina Chen, U.S. Department of Labor for a total of 81 visits.

The following reports were submitted by students attending the 2023 WLTI:

ARIZONA

Gloria Montaño Greene, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The students were given a tour of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and met with Ms. Greene in her office. She answered the students' questions and shared her life experiences. We spoke about water management, food safety, precision agriculture and research. The students talked about being first-generation high school and college graduates coming from a minority background. She is a strong supporter of our programs.

Alexander Sinclair, senior transportation specialist, Office of the Secretary of Transportation. The students interacted with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Public Engagement. They shared their Framework stories and involvement in CTE and SkillsUSA and worked to relate those experiences to work the DOT does, especially around infrastructure development, highlighting the skills gap and the need for skilled labor. They were not familiar with SkillsUSA or CTE and so the visit served as a great opportunity for both sides.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Luke Rhine and Chief of Staff DeAndre Jones, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. The students shared their Framework stories. We asked how we can support OCTAE in delivering, strengthening and promoting CTE. They asked us to provide publicity for special grants offered by the office and to

continue telling our stories about CTE. The Deputy Assistant Secretary is involved with SkillsUSA because he taught at the local level.

Sen. Kelly — met with Katherine Phillips, legislative assistant. The students spoke to her about the impact of CTE on their lives, the impact of Perkins funding and how CTE impacts the future Arizona workforce. Ms. Phillips expressed support and showed interest in the competitions. She said that she believes Sen. Kelly is very supportive of CTSOs.

Sen. Sinema — met with Kevin Moore, legislative correspondent. We talked about why funding for CTE is necessary, how we benefit from it and the negatives of not receiving enough funding. Kevin mentioned that Sen. Sinema supports CTE programs and always votes for education funding.

Rep. Biggs — met with aide. The students shared information about CTE and illustrated the importance of Perkins funding. The staff confirmed that the congressman supports CTE.

Rep. Gallego — met with Maggie McGuire. The students talked about SkillsUSA and how it supports their CTE classes and about their individual programs. They also shared that they feel more prepared for their career paths because of SkillsUSA. The group invited Rep. Gallego to come to the local skills competitions.

Rep. Juan Ciscomani — met with Gabrielle Sheitelman, legislative assistant. The students introduced SkillsUSA and discussed each of their CTE class experiences and the impact they have made on their lives. They also shared how SkillsUSA helped them learn skills that will help them in their future career paths. The students invited them to attend SkillsUSA events in their district as well as the Arizona State Leadership & Skills Conference. Gabrielle supports CTE and has had personal experiences in health CTE classes.

Rep. Paul Gosar — met with Nick Bell, senior legislative assistant. The students met with Rep. Gosar's office and shared their perspectives on funding CTE. We talked about how Perkins funding is a vital part of supporting CTE and that CTE gives students a reason to excel in school, continue through graduation and to have a clearer path forward. He wasn't aware of SkillsUSA/CTSOs and CTE, so the visit was impactful.

Rep. Lesko — met with Brendon Gallo, deputy chief of staff. Our visit was very positive. Mr. Gallo introduced himself and talked about his experience as a SkillsUSA member. The students shared their Framework stories and their personal experiences with their SkillsUSA and how it has helped them overcome some challenges in their personal life. The students invited Mr. Gallo to upcoming SkillsUSA events in Arizona.

Rep. Stanton — met with Mary Anderson. We spoke with Ms. Anderson in the congressman's office for over 25 minutes and took a group photo before we left. The students discussed the importance of CTE and how it has impacted their lives. She seemed interested that students were able to receive different certifications from their CTE programs.

CALIFORNIA

Sen. Butler — met with Taylor Dubard. We talked about our SkillsUSA experiences and the importance of continued Perkins funding. They are supporters of CTE and SkillsUSA.

Rep. Obernolte — met with Kalyn Schroder. We didn't have an appointment. We dropped off materials and asked for their continued support for Perkins funding.

Rep. McClintock — met with Thomas Young. Our visit went well. We talked about CTE and SkillsUSA and their importance, what we do with funding and why we should be funded. He said he isn't part of the committee that would vote for more funding, but he is a supporter.

Rep. Lofgren — met with Zamora. We didn't have an appointment and the representative was not available. We asked if we could leave SkillsUSA materials and we did and she gave us a business card for Chad Powell, policy advisor, so we could submit materials digitally to him. We briefly mentioned Perkins and SkillsUSA.

Rep. DeSaulnier — met with Rachel Colucci. We talked about SkillsUSA, CTE pathways, Perkins funding and its impact and our own personal experiences regarding how SkillsUSA impacts us. We invited his office to attend the state conference.

Rep. Takano — met with him. We talked about SkillsUSA, Perkins funding and its impact and our experiences regarding how SkillsUSA impacts us. We asked that he continue supporting Perkins funding and we asked him to come to the state conference in Ontario, Calif.

Rep. Gomez — met with Ethan Dodd. The visit went well. Ethan mentioned that Rep. Gomez is fully supportive of Perkins funding and CTE. He said that Rep. Gomez wasn't a great student, but thanks to Perkins funding he was able to attend a community college in Riverside, Calif. He also mentioned the representative's support for Latinos and people of color, and he acknowledged that Perkins funding is beneficial for disadvantaged communities. We talked about employability skills and closing the skills gap. He said that Rep. Gomez supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

Rep. Brownley — met with Hannah Singer. She said that Rep. Brownley supports Perkins funding and is an advocate for CTE programs. We talked about Perkins, explained CTE, gave our personal SkillsUSA and CTE experiences and the impact of Perkins funding on our CTE classes.

Rep. Lieu — met with Nick Mechlor. The meeting went very well. Mr. Mechlor wasn't too familiar with CTE or CTSOs. He asked how CTE is organized. We explained that each school has different CTE programs. We talked about SkillsUSA and our Framework stories.

Rep. Carbajal — met with Jesse Ebadi. He was not aware of CTE or SkillsUSA, but he is in favor of what helps the youth. We told him that having the latest and most updated equipment to train on is necessary to be career ready. We shared our POWERR stories and information about our CTE program and the skills gap.

Rep. Costa — met with Kit Devine. We talked about Perkins, CTE, our school and WLTi experiences, how Perkins affects our pathways and about the state conference. She said that Rep. Costa is passionate about supporting education.

Rep. Penetta — met with Seamus McKinnon. We talked about SkillsUSA, our CTE pathways, Perkins funding and its impact and how SkillsUSA impacts us. He said Rep. Penetta supports CTE.

Rep. Lee — met with Jackson Mittleman. We talked about SkillsUSA, CTE and Perkins. He mentioned that the representative supports education funding.

Rep. Garcia — met with Scott Watson. The visit went very well. Mr. Watson mentioned that SkillsUSA members met with him this year and that he was familiar with CTE and SkillsUSA. He said that Rep. Garcia is a strong proponent for CTE, skills and students being involved in the trades. Scott Watson is a supporter of SkillsUSA and CTE and he said that Rep. Garcia is also a proponent of CTE programs and Perkins funding.

Rep. Huffman — met with Quentin Dupouy. Mr. Dupouy said that Rep. Huffman is a strong supporter of CTE and green energy. He has campaigned on CTE's behalf and got an extra \$200K for his region. We started off with our Framework stories and then explained SkillsUSA. We said that it is a student run organization that partners with industry to define what skills employers are looking for in prospective employees. We talked about the importance of Perkins funding and how it affects our classes and CTSO organizations. They are very supportive of CTE and SkillsUSA.

Rep. Peters — met with Jackie Sobol, legislative assistant. We talked about the benefits of CTE and how it impacts students and the importance of Perkins funding. Ms. Sobol was supportive of SkillsUSA and CTE.

Rep. Harder — met with him and Kara Verma. Stephanie spoke about SkillsUSA and the need for continued funding to create opportunities for students in Stockton, Calif. Angel spoke about the competition and the impact of competitions in exploring students' potential career paths. Paola spoke about the continued support of Perkins, her experience in the construction pathway and her application to be nominated for West Point. He is supportive of CTE and SkillsUSA.

Rep. Garamendi — met with Abigail Leonard, legislative correspondent. In the waiting area, we met with a representative from Wynman Associates, an industry partner, who spoke highly of SkillsUSA and the work that we are doing. In the meeting with Ms. Leonard, Stephanie shared her experience as a delegate and the impact it made on her. Angel shared his experience in participating in a competition and how it impacted him. Ms. Leonard said she wished she would have had an opportunity to take CTE classes in high schools.

Rep. Steel — met with Ken Clifford, deputy chief of staff and legislative director. We introduced ourselves and SkillsUSA California and talked about the skills gap and why Perkins is so important for us. Mr. Clifford said that the congresswoman supports CTE 100%.

Rep. Swalwell — met with Carly Sincavitch. Angel and Stephanie talked about how SkillsUSA has impacted their lives, giving them opportunities that they would not have otherwise. Angel

spoke about his competition and how SkillsUSA had prepared him for it. Stephanie spoke about being a delegate and how it helped her to be a better communicator. We asked her to continue to support Perkins funding. Ms. Sincavitch said the students' stories and their presentation were well articulated.

Rep. Eshoo. Tried to meet with her or her legislative assistant, but they were unable to meet. We left a SkillsUSA folder with their front office staff.

Rep. Mullin. Tried to meet with him or his legislative assistant, but they were unable to meet. We left a SkillsUSA folder with their front office staff.

Rep. Duarte. Tried to meet with him or his legislative assistant, but they were unable to meet. We left a SkillsUSA folder with their front office staff.

Rep. McCarthy — met with Blake Center. We talked over the impact and influence SkillsUSA and CTE have on us and gave our personal stories. We talked about why we need more funding and where the funding goes. Speaker McCarthy didn't know much about CTE.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Rep. Norton — met with her. She was expecting students from HOSA but agreed to meet with us. The meeting was very short, but we were able to explain what a CTSO is. She was not aware of SkillsUSA, so we explained it to her.

COLORADO

Sen. Hickenlooper — met with Taylor Ware. We explained that CTE and how SkillsUSA changes lives. We invited the senator to Colorado's State Leadership & Skills Conference. Ms. Ware said that he supports CTE and SkillsUSA and he is part of the Senator CTE Caucus.

Rep. Crow — met with Mackenzie Fallt. After introductions, the state officers talked about SkillsUSA's mission and competitions and the importance of SkillsUSA to both the local and national communities. We asked for Rep. Crow's support for Perkins funding, and we invited his office to attend the Colorado State Leadership & Skills Conference in April of 2024. Rep. Crow is a member of the House CTE Caucus and supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

Rep. Petterson—met with Katey Foley. After introductions, the state officers explained SkillsUSA's place among CTSOs and our specializations. We talked about our competitions and the opportunities we offer at the state and national conferences. We invited Rep. Petterson's office to our state conference. Ms. Foley said that the representative had no strong stance for or against CTE and SkillsUSA.

GEORGIA

Rep. Allen — met with Jane Douglas. Ms. Douglas listened to our CTE advocacy presentation. She was aware of the needs of special populations (single mothers, students with disabilities, low-income families and students who must use public transportation). We were able to provide statistics regarding the student population and one student officer gave a personal account of both financial and transportation obstacles that have made completion of his education difficult. She was glad to hear about their experiences and about how SkillsUSA is giving them opportunities to showcase their skills and prove that they are workforce ready.

Rep. Collins — met with Kevin Petroccione. We told him that SkillsUSA is helping to close the skills gap. We explained that SkillsUSA offers opportunities for competition and that Georgia is the fifth in the nation with the most medals won. They were glad to hear about SkillsUSA and CTE.

Rep. Bishop — met with Jack Bryan. We explained how our local chapter uses the Perkins funds to purchase essential equipment, including law enforcement training aids, crime lab supplies, and materials for our fully functional courtroom. We also discussed the potential dangers of a government shutdown. Mr. Bryan wasn't aware of SkillsUSA or CTE before we talked with him, but he said that Rep. Bishop is very passionate about education.

Rep. McBath — met with Matthew Golden. Mr. Golden was very excited to hear about SkillsUSA and how CTE helps students become workforce ready. We explained how Perkins funding benefits us at Gwinnett Technical College. We provided statistics that there are 9 million jobs vacant in the country and that Georgia has a total population of 10.1 million. He was glad to hear about the students' experiences with CTE and how SkillsUSA is giving opportunities to showcase their skills in competition and prove they are workforce ready.

Rep. Clyde — met with Toni Davis. Ms. Davis was very attentive and interested in learning more about SkillsUSA. She revealed that Perkins would be extended until the end of 2024. In the middle of our discussion, Rep. Clyde emerged from his office to meet each state officer. After hearing our advocacy presentation, he took a picture of the team in front of his office. Ms. Davis was excited to hear about the national medals Lanier Technical College won and said she would reach out to us to schedule a visit to the college for the congressman. Rep. Clyde asked that we stay in touch.

INDIANA

Sen. Braun — met with Robert Rische and Lauren Hickey. Each student introduced themselves and what school they attend. They talked about SkillsUSA, presented information about CTE and added their personal stories. We invited Sen. Braun and his office to come to the Indiana State Leadership & Skills Conference. We told him that we appreciated the video that Sen. Braun created for our conference since he couldn't come last year. Sen. Braun is a supporter of CTE and SkillsUSA.

Rep. Mrvan — met with Sydney Young. Each student introduced themselves and what school they attend. They talked about SkillsUSA, presented information about CTE and added their

personal stories. During the visit, they talked about the skills gap, Perkins, and SkillsUSA. Ms. Young seemed moved by the students' passion and became choked up as they advocated for CTE needs. At one point, she offered one of the students her notepad and pen and told them they could do her job. We invited Rep. Mrvan's office to come to the Indiana State Leadership & Skills Conference.

Rep. Pence — met with Thomas Schacht. Each student introduced themselves and what school they attend. They talked about SkillsUSA, presented information about CTE and added personal touches by using their personal stories. During the visit, they talked about the skills gap, Perkins, their personal experiences and SkillsUSA. We invited Rep. Pence's office to come to the SkillsUSA Indiana State Leadership & Skills Conference in April.

ILLINOIS

Rep. LaHood — met with Greg Warren. We had a long discussion and talked about Perkins, our CTE classes, our community college, dual credit, the state competition and SkillsUSA. Mr. Warren said that Rep. LaHood is an advocate for CTE and Perkins.

MASSACHUSETTS

Conor Freeley, Deputy Advisor and Christina Chen, Senior Advisor to the Labor Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor. The meeting began with brief introductions from our team. We gave a brief description of SkillsUSA and told them our three goals to talk about: the skills gap, the advantages students have in CTE and finding a solution to fix old legislation regarding hazardous occupations for minors. We told them that students can use the hoisting equipment in the classroom with their supervising advisor but can't use it in co-op even though an advisor is supervising. We asked if we could find a solution to the limitations set by the 17 hazardous occupations for minors. They said they will talk to the OSHA staff and they will keep in touch with our state director.

Sen. Warren — met with Carlo Juntilla, legislative staffer. We gave introductions and discussed three main points. We talked about the Carl D. Perkins Act, funding for vocational school renovations and the possibility of Elizabeth Warren joining the Senate CTE Caucus. We stressed the importance of Perkin's funding to our schools and to CTE on a broader scale. We also talked about vocational institutions becoming worn down and the need for improvements. Mr. Juntilla said he was amazed after learning about CTE and supports it 100%. He said he was a former history teacher, so he was happy to learn about a program that helps students get the best education possible.

Rep. McGovern and Rep. Lynch — met with Caroline Flynn (legislative aide for Rep. Lynch). We walked to the office of Rep. Lynch. We made introductions, looked around his office, took pictures and looked at some of the legislation that he signed framed on the walls. We also saw some of his positions from his trips abroad. We then took a walk toward the Capitol Visitors Center using the underground corridors connecting offices with the Capitol. Along our way, talked to Ms.

Flynn about SkillsUSA and the skills gap and one of the students shared their Framework story. We met Rep. McGovern on our way. We introduced ourselves and discussed the opportunities CTE students have. Rep. Lynch was a former iron worker. Ms. Flynn supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

MICHIGAN

Sen. Stabenow — met with legislative staff. We shared our Framework stories and advocated for continued and additional funding and support for CTE. We said that inflation is impacting our school and classroom budgets. We invited staff to attend the state conference.

MISSISSIPPI

Sen. Smith — met with her. The students talked about their personal experiences in CTE to the senator. They discussed Perkins funding and the disparity in allocation of funds across school districts in Mississippi. They talked about the formula used to allocate funds and offered multiple suggestions to disperse funding to inadequately funded school districts. The senator was very concerned, and she made plans for us to follow up with each other. Sen. Smith is very supportive of CTE.

Sen. Wicker — met with Katie Roberts. After presenting their SkillsUSA and CTE stories, they discussed key issues and concerns with Perkins funding. They presented personal stories of how a lack of funding has affected their individual programs. Sen. Wicker supports education bills.

Rep. Guest — met with Milton Robinson. After presenting their SkillsUSA and CTE stories, they discussed key issues and concerns with Perkins funding. They presented personal stories of how a lack of funding has affected their individual programs. Rep. Guest visits Mississippi's CTE programs often and supports bills to bring industry and jobs to Mississippi.

NEW JERSEY

Rep. Norcross — met with Madison Hughes, legislative aide. Rep. Norcross is a supporter of CTE, as he is a union electrician. He believes in the value of skilled trades. We discussed the importance of Perkins funding to ensure students are trained with tools, supplies and certifications. He is a big supporter of CTE and understands that Perkins funding is crucial to training students to be job ready.

NEW MEXICO

Rep. Vasquez — met with him. The visit was about 20 minutes and the students felt at ease, so their presentation was very natural. We shared Framework stories and talked about the importance of Perkins funding in New Mexico.

NEW YORK

Rep. Williams — met with Samuel Havard. We talked about Perkin's funding and our local CTE center. We explained SkillsUSA and invited him to our local BOCES, regional and state conferences. Mr. Havard said that the congressman is on two committees that support SkillsUSA.

Rep. Morelle — met with Jordan Jablonski. We explained CTE and the importance of Perkins. We asked if the congressman would come to our fall leadership conference and state competition. Mr. Jablonski supports SkillsUSA, and he made a note of our suggestion for Rep. Morelle to join the House CTE Caucus.

Rep. Ryan — met with him and Callie Lucia. We Rep. Ryan was eager to hear about what he could do to help support us. We talked about SkillsUSA's mission, the need for more awareness for CTE and continued support from Perkins. We ended the session with some photographs. Rep. Ryan is a strong supporter of CTE and has attended area conferences and visited CTE campuses.

Rep. Tonko — met with Connor Glitz. We talked about our CTE and SkillsUSA experiences. Mr. Glitz wasn't aware of Perkins. He said he would reach out to Rep. Tonko and Senior Legislative Assistant Darian Harbeck about possibly attending the regional and state conferences. Rep. Tonko is already on the House CTE Caucus.

NORTH CAROLINA

Sen. Budd — met with Matthew Ide. One student discussed his SkillsUSA journey and how he has benefited from it. He also spoke about the importance of Perkins funding and how his school uses it to support CTE and CTSOs. He concluded by inviting Sen. Budd to the state conference. Sen. Budd is on the Senate CTE Caucus, so he supports CTE.

Sen. Tillis — met with Gray Rixey. One student discussed his SkillsUSA journey and how he has benefited from it. He also talked about the importance of Perkins at his school and how they use it to support CTE and CTSOs. He concluded by inviting Sen. Tillis to the state conference. Sen. Tillis knew about SkillsUSA and he is a big supporter of CTE.

Rep. Rouzer — met with Matthew McCulloch. We spoke about the importance of funding at my school and how the school uses it to support CTE and CTSOs. We invited Rep. Rouzer to the state conference.

OKLAHOMA

Rep. Brecheen — met with Lauren Graham. We talked about CTE and SkillsUSA and about how the skilled workforce provides a boost to the economy and a purpose for those not seeking a college education. We also talked about how CTE has shaped us to be who we are and how it has

empowered us to be future leaders of the workforce. Rep. Brecheen was involved in agricultural education and served as the state president for FFA.

TEXAS

Sen. Cruz — met with Madeline Chansolme. Ms. Chansolme already knew a lot about SkillsUSA and CTE. We shared our experiences with CTE and SkillsUSA and how it has helped us. We also talked about how Perkins funding helps our specific CTE courses. Ms. Chansolme was a correspondent liaison for education and healthcare. She mentioned that she and Sen. Cruz were concerned about unfilled jobs and how they recognize that SkillsUSA and CTE are helping to fill them.

Rep. Weber — met with Will Greene. Rep. Weber voted for increased Perkins funding the last time. We asked him to continue supporting and encourage his peers to support it.

Rep. Self — met with him. We explained SkillsUSA, CTE and the Perkins Act to Rep. Self. We shared our personal experiences of SkillsUSA and CTE and also shared how Perkins funding helps us.

Rep. Jackson — met with Katie Wallach. We discussed the skills gap and how we can close it. We shared a Framework Story and information about the Skills Framework. They support CTE.

WYOMING

Rep. Hageman — met with her. The conversation was productive. She has voted for CTE bills in the past.

Rep. Lummis — met with her. We facilitated the conversation, so it made it easy to understand the importance of Perkins funding. She has voted for CTE bills in the past.

Rep. Barrasso — met with staff. We talked about how the current funding affects. Rep. Barrasso has supported us many times by attending the state competition.