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SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 1035: Focusing Federal Career and Technical Education Act Funds on Blueprint School-to-work Apprenticeship Goals Act

Date: March 6, 2024

Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. Over the years, DRM has focused significant effort on both representation of older students with disabilities who are preparing to exit the school system and on addressing through policy work, the systemic barriers that have prevented many students with disabilities from accessing vocational and technical programs that would prepare them for successful careers. DRM supports Senate Bill 1035, which would require the State Board of Education to collaborate with the Career and Technical Education Committee (CTE) to develop and implement the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Senate Bill 1035 would require the State Board of Education to provide the CTE committee with its proposed strategy and priority for funds received in accordance with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The CTE will be required to approve the State Board of Education's plans before they are able to be implemented. Additionally, the CTE will be given the power to allocate funds directly, in accordance with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

The purpose of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is to ensure that students have access and opportunity to engage in career programs of study that (1) align to high-skill, high-wage and/or in-demand careers, (2) lead to earning industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials that will allow entrance and/or advancement in a specific cluster; and (3) provide career-based learning experiences that require the application of academic and technical knowledge and skills in a work setting. By providing the CTE Committee with the power to both oversee how funds are being implemented and the power to actively distribute funds itself, the CTE Committee will be poised to better implement strategies to achieve the goals set forth by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

All students will benefit from a more effective implementation of strategies to achieve the goals set forth by the Perkins Act. However, students with disabilities are poised to see an immense impact from the expanded availability of effective transition services and opportunities to prepare for life after high school. Therefore, it is not only imperative to prioritize the inclusion of students with disabilities in receiving these resources but also as a voice dictating the method and strategies by which these resources are put in practice. In the State of Maryland and across the country, students with disabilities



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have had difficulty accessing the same CTE programs provided to their general education peers.¹ The National Center for Learning Disabilities states that:

“When students with disabilities have access to and the supports needed to thrive in high-quality CTE programs, the outcomes are promising. In general, participation in CTE courses has been tied to a positive impact on wages, and concentrated CTE participation improved graduation and employment for students with physical and learning disabilities.”²

Given that the data supports positive outcomes from CTE enrollment by students with disabilities, ensuring access to CTE programming for *all* students must be a priority through the implementation of Senate Bill 1035. The additional oversight and guidance for funding constructed by this legislation, creates an important opportunity for prioritization and inclusion of students with disabilities that must not be ignored. For these reasons, DRM supports SB 1035.

For more information or questions, contact Braden Stinar, Staff Attorney at (bradens@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-929-6859).

¹ Theobald, R. J., Goldhaber, D. D., Gratz, T. M., & Holden, K. L. (2019). Career and technical education, inclusion, and postsecondary outcomes for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 52(2), 109-119.

² https://careertech.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AdvanceCTE_Making_Good_on_Promise_Students_Disabilities_07212020.pdf