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Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 4,500 elected officials who govern the commonwealth’s public school districts, we are writing to request your support of House Bill 602, sponsored by Representative Clint Owlett.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Pennsylvania employers were struggling to fill positions in high demand occupations with skilled laborers. A key component in training skilled laborers for those positions are the career and technical education (CTE) programs at the state’s public school districts and career and technical centers (CTCs). However, many school districts and CTCs lack the resources needed to create, update, and expand education programs in response to local employment needs.

House Bill 602 would create a new tax credit program called the Career and Technical Education Investment Incentive Program which would be used to create, update, or expand CTE programs, increase enrollments, and update technology and equipment at school districts and CTCs, which will increase the number of students preparing to enter the workforce and provide them with the necessary skills.  Not only would this program be a benefit to students, but it would also stimulate that state’s economy by supporting businesses through the training of skilled workers, and by helping more individuals obtain good, family-sustaining jobs.

The tax credit structure in the bill mirrors the longstanding Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs and would be open to wide variety of businesses operating in PA. The bill also contains numerous provisions which will ensure transparency and the effective allocation of funds. For example, only school districts and CTCs with CTE programs approved by the Department of Education would be eligible to receive funds, the bill contains requirements for annual reporting to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) on the program’s usage, and DCED is required to submit an annual report to the Legislature.

PSBA would like to thank Representative Owlett for his leadership on this important issue and for working with PSBA on the bill. For the reasons stated above, PSBA supports HB 602 and ask for your support on this important legislation. We want to thank you for your attention to these important issues and the dedication you have shown to the students of this Commonwealth.