



## Summary of 2024 WLTl Congressional Visits

### **Legislative visits on Sept. 24, 2024:**

SkillsUSA members visited 20 senators and 53 representatives plus Associate Deputy Secretary of Labor Nikki McKinney and Captain Eric Johnson, U.S. Pentagon for a total of 75 visits.

*The following reports were submitted by students attending the 2024 WLTl:*

### **ALABAMA**

**Sen. Katie Britt — met with staff.** We told her about the employability skills that SkillsUSA taught us. We talked about how having access to CTE gives students access to opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise had and how students have a head start in the workforce by participating in CTSO programs that provide real work experience. Sen. Britt supports CTSO programs and CTE.

**Rep. Dale Strong — met with him.** We talked about how CTE has affected us, our schools and our communities. We asked for continued funding and support of not just our CTE classes, but also SkillsUSA. Rep. Strong said he feels like CTE is a great investment. He likes what CTSOs stand for.

**Rep. Barry Moore — met with him.** We told him what CTE has done for us and how CTE is an investment that continuously has positive results. We talked about how Perkins funding affects Alabama's schools. Rep. Moore said he feels like CTE is a great investment and believes in what CTSOs stand for.

### **ARIZONA**

**Sen. Mark Kelly — met with him.** Sen. Kelly asked us to ask questions, so we asked how we could strengthen partnerships to better support CTE programs. We didn't have time to share our personal stories, but we got our message across about the importance of funding for CTE. Sen. Kelly has been a strong supporter of CTE. One example is his co-sponsorship of the JOBS program, which aims to expand Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term job training programs. This

legislation directly supports CTE by making it easier for students to access financial aid for programs that offer industry-recognized credentials. Rep. Kelly has also advocated for Perkins.

**Rep. Debbie Lesko — met with Justin Camp.** We shared three main points—the lack of equal funding for different CTE programs; uneven teacher salaries and program funding; more CTE funding goes toward middle schools rather than high schools. Rep. Lasko supports CTE education. The staff understood our points.

**Rep. Eli Crane — met with Annika Erickson.** We prepared as a team before our visit. Everyone had a few points they talked about including CTE, Perkins, the skills gap, statistics about the skills gap and Perkins, Framework stories, community service and our impact on the future. Annika was not familiar with SkillsUSA and CTE. She thanked us for informing her.

**Rep. Juan Ciscomani — met with him and his legislative assistant.** We briefly met with the representative before he left, and he encouraged us to keep pursuing CTE and our dreams because he understands where many of us come from with our Hispanic heritage. We shared our personal stories about how CTE has sharpened our technical skills, but also personal skills and confidence. His assistant said Rep. Ciscomani voted for Perkins and has spoken with CTE programs in the Phoenix area to learn about them.

**Rep. Greg Stanton — met with his legislative assistant.** We talked mainly about Perkins funding, CTE and SkillsUSA. Rep. Stanton was previously the mayor of Phoenix. His assistant agreed that CTE is crucial for a students' development in becoming young adults. She was not familiar with SkillsUSA, but did know a little about Perkins. She expressed appreciation that we explained it to her.

**Rep. Jose “Diego” Espinoza — met with the receptionist.** We asked if the Rep. or his staff could meet with us, but they couldn't. We gave them a SkillsUSA folder and followed up with an email.

## **CALIFORNIA**

**Rep. David Valadao.** We stopped by and talked briefly about SkillsUSA and CTE, but did not have a sit-down meeting.

**Rep. Barbara Lee.** We stopped by and talked about SkillsUSA and CTE, but didn't have a sit-down meeting.

**Rep. Jim Costa.** We stopped by and talked about SkillsUSA and CTE, but didn't have a sit-down meeting.

**Rep. Young Kim — met with Alexander Keledjian.** We couldn't get an appointment in advance, but we stopped by. We talked about the Framework and the impact it has. We summarized our Framework stories, talked about Perkins and why SkillsUSA is important. Rep. Kim's legislative assistant for education already understood CTE and supports SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Pete Aguilar — met with Maryana Sawaged.** We talked about CTE and how Perkins helps support our education. We discussed SkillsUSA California's leadership academy and other travel opportunities for students. They support CTE and becoming involved in SkillsUSA. Rep. Aguilar has visited Entrepreneur High School, a newly developed CTE based high school.

**Rep. Vince Fong — met with Elijah Lidgett.** Elijah was a former SkillsUSA California state officer, so he knew a lot about SkillsUSA. We told our Framework stories and talked about SkillsUSA and the California state community service project.

**Rep. Jay Obernolte — met with Patrick Paolini.** We talked about why SkillsUSA and Perkins funding are important. We invited Rep. Obernolte to our events in California. They support SkillsUSA and CTE. He was very open and agreeable. He offered to give grant opportunities or letters of support to chapters in California.

**Rep. Josh Harder — met with Kara Verma.** Talked with her at the front desk and gave them a SkillsUSA folder. We introduced SkillsUSA to her and sent them a follow up email.

**Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove — met with Kyler Gilkey.** We dropped our information with Kyler Gilkey and talked about SkillsUSA's mission and its impact, the Framework and how it impacts students and the opportunities for recognition and competition. She said she would pass the information along to the representative.

**Rep. Robert Garcia — met with Blackmon Richard.** He had an understanding of SkillsUSA before we arrived. Explained the opportunities for recognition and competition and talked about how Perkins supports CTE programs and helps students. Richard supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

## **GEORGIA**

**Sen. Jon Ossoff — met with Phillip Grant.** Phillip said that Sen. Ossoff is a supporter of CTE and would be interested in learning more about SkillsUSA. He isn't on the CTE Caucus, but Phillip said he would be interested in joining. We invited Sen. Ossoff and his staff to our state and national conference, as well as to tour our college campuses.

**Rep. Andrew Clyde — met with him.** The representative is not a member of the CTE Caucus and didn't know about SkillsUSA. We provided with him with information on CTE, SkillsUSA, the importance of Perkins and more. He said that he felt that Perkins should be disseminated at the state level and not the federal level. He supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Buddy Carter — met with Chris Crawford.** Chris was not familiar with SkillsUSA and the role that Perkins funding plays in CTE. We provided him with information on CTE, SkillsUSA, Perkins and the vital roles our representatives play. He told us that Rep. Carter is a supporter of CTE and would be interested in learning more about CTSOs.

**Rep. Rick Allen — met with him.** He is a member of the CTE caucus and supports SkillsUSA and Perkins funding. We asked for continued support of Perkins, CTE and SkillsUSA and invited Rep. Allen and his staff to our state conference and to tour our college campuses.

## IDAHO

**Sen. Mike Crapo — met with Nate Favero.** Nate was very knowledgeable about CTE and the importance of the programs to our nation. Sen. Crapo also stepped out of a finance committee meeting to meet with us and remind us of his ongoing support of funding programs such as ours. Nate was very knowledgeable about CTE and said that he has also met our state CTE director on multiple occasions to work together to improve our programs.

**Sen. Jim Risch — met with Matthew Clemence.** Matthew was very familiar with the impact SkillsUSA and CTE has in Idaho, as well as across the nation. We were each able to talk about the benefits that CTE and SkillsUSA have had on our growth and career readiness. We thanked Sen. Crapo as he has always advocated for our CTE programs as he recognizes the impact that our programs have in developing Idaho's economy and community. We invited them to attend our SLSC.

**Rep. Mike Simpson — met with Eric Morris.** The visit was very valuable as Morris was a new member of the congressman's education team. We talked about CTE and SkillsUSA. We also discussed the importance of continuing to support Perkins funding. Rep. Simpson is very involved with Perkins committees.

## ILLINOIS

**Rep. Darin LaHood — met with Samuel Jockisch.** He had previously heard of SkillsUSA. We talked about Perkins funding for the schools in his district and explained how CTE and SkillsUSA prepares students for the workforce. We closed the meeting with handouts which included the SkillsUSA Illinois Success Stories booklet and gave him information on upcoming events. Rep. LaHood supports CTE and SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Sean Casten — met with Lucy Schmitz.** We met with her in the hallway outside the office. She knew quite a bit about CTE and SkillsUSA, but was interested to learn more. We shared some Framework stories and talked about Perkins funding and how it supports our programs. She asked us about Moraine Valley Community College and one of our state officers was able to talk with her about it. She said Rep. Casten supports CTE and Perkins funding.

## INDIANA

**Sen. Mike Braun — met with him.** It was a short meeting as he was coming in from another meeting and then had to rush back out. He told us that he supports SkillsUSA, CTE and in closing the skills gap. He is running for governor, and he spoke at the WLTI CTE rally a couple of years ago, so he was very responsive.

**Rep. Jim Banks — met with George Pulizzi.** We talked about CTE and its importance to each of us. We talked about how we are learning skills that can lead us into the workforce or give us a

foundation to work while in college or trade school. Rep. Banks is on the CTE Caucus. Pulizzi was very interested in learning about SkillsUSA and asked a lot of questions.

**Rep. Andrew Carson — met with Kevin Griffen.** We talked about CTE and how it has impacted our lives. We talked about the skills gap and how our programs are graduating skilled workers who can fill job openings that are in high demand. We also talked about Perkins and how the funding keeps schools up to date with equipment, supplies and curriculum. They support CTE and Rep. Carson is on the CTE Caucus. We will send an invitation to our state conference.

## **LOUISIANA**

**Sen. John Neely Kennedy — met with Connor Dominique.** Connor is from Lafayette, La and is familiar with the LCTCS regional college. He was receptive about the importance of CTE programs and SkillsUSA. He was interested to hear more about the plans for the spring SLSC. We ask the senator to advocate for funding for our CTE programs, as it is crucial for them to be supported.

**Rep. Troy Carter, Sr. — met with him, Ryan Hedgepeth and Layla Brooks.** Rep. Carter is passionate about workforce development and liked learning about the students' perspective on CTE. He was excited about our individual education and career paths and encouraged us to continue to be successful. We talked about the 7 to 1 ratio of the number of CTE workers that are needed to support each bachelor's degree job. He took individual photos with each of us at his desk.

**Rep. Mike Johnson — met with Tyler Fagan.** We met with the Speaker's senior policy advisor. We shared the importance of CTE programs and SkillsUSA and he was excited to learn more. We talked about the spring SLSC, and he was happy to know that it would be hosted in the Speaker's district. After the meeting, we were taken on a tour of the Capitol and sent out onto the speaker's balcony and go into the House Chamber to watch a presentation of an issue. Then we traveled via the tunnel under the buildings onto the Senate side to meet with Sen. Kennedy. He encouraged us to keep in touch.

## **MAINE**

**Sen. Susan Collins — met with her.** We talked with her about each student's CTE journey and her support of CTE and Perkins made them possible. She is a major supporter of Perkins and additional funding for CTE in Maine.

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

**Associate Deputy Secretary of Labor Nikki McKinney.** We had 10 students, two advisors and three superintendents in the meeting. We started with introductions and then asked her about the work that she does at the Department of Labor. We talked about SkillsUSA and how the DOL and SkillsUSA's missions align and how we can collaborate to help prepare the future workforce of America. She is a proud champion for the skilled trades and SkillsUSA. We said that she looks forward to our meeting each year in D.C., and how much she has learned from the group.

**Captain Eric Johnson, U.S. Pentagon.** Our day started with meeting Captain Johnson at the Pentagon. From there he gave us a tour and the background history of the 9-11 memorial. We participated in give a stone, take a stone, to learn about and honor those who died in the plane hijacking that hit the pentagon. Following our conversation about SkillsUSA and CTE, he came along with us to the Arlington National Cemetery to watch SkillsUSA Massachusetts do their own wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Captain Johnson served as a SkillsUSA Massachusetts state officer when he was in a CTE program in high school. He takes time out every year so we can have this amazing experience.

**Sen. Elizabeth Warren — met with Alexis Lane.** We talked about SkillsUSA, Perkins, the jobs shortage in America and then discussed some of the certifications we had earned from our training programs and how the federal funding has helped us. We asked if Sen. Warren would consider joining the CTE Caucus. Sen. Warren is a supporter of SkillsUSA and that shows through her willingness to set aside time for us to meet with her staff each year.

**Rep. Katherine Clark — met with Ashley Bykerk.** We explained what SkillsUSA is and then we jumped into sharing our three goals for the meeting: to discuss Perkins, the need for newly updated schools and CTE training programs and asking her to join the CTE Caucus. She told us that Rep. Clark is an advocate for the skilled trades and is happy to work with SkillsUSA on any issues we may have.

**Rep. Jim McGovern --- met with him.** We asked for newly updated schools/CTE training programs, and for him to join the CTE Caucus. We also invited him to the SLSC in May. We talked about SkillsUSA's mission and the Framework and how we play a vital role in creating the future workforce for America. He supports the skilled trades because he has spent his career in public service. He recognizes that CTE plays a big role in our economy. He didn't know much about SkillsUSA but was interested in learning more.

**Rep. Jake Auchincloss — met with him.** We talked with him briefly on the steps of the Capitol building right when congress adjourned. We discussed SkillsUSA and how we prepare our students for America's future workforce. We asked him to join the CTE Caucus and we told him about the importance of CTE and how the lack of skilled workers poses a national security threat. He supports the skilled trades. He knew a little about SkillsUSA but was happy to learn more. National officer Kallie Allen was able to meet him and discuss issues concerning her district.

## **NEW JERSEY**

**Sen. Cory Booker — met with Gloria Nuñez.** She told us that Sen. Booker is a strong advocate for CTE programs. We shared how CTE and SkillsUSA have helped us improve our self-motivation, planning, organizing, management, communication and job-specific skills. We told her that Perkins funding gave our schools access to different equipment. She said that Sen. Booker had co-authored a bill to create CTE Month in February.

**Rep. Donald Norcross — met with Samantha DeVito.** The students shared their Framework stories and experiences in SkillsUSA. They emphasized that these experiences would not have been

possible without Perkins funding. DeVito supports SkillsUSA and CTE. She shared her own knowledge about her home state's deficit of skilled workers with waitlisted technical schools. Rep. Norcross was a union electrician during his career. DeVito said that of Rep. Norcross' three children (a lawyer, a doctor and an electrician), that the electrician is the only one with no college debt, a home that is paid for and a solid retirement fund.

## **NEW YORK**

**Sen. Chuck Schumer — met with Alex His.** The visit was amazing. We were able to get a tour from one of the interns and we enjoyed seeing the Capitol. We shared our Framework stories and how Perkins funds affect us. Sen. Schumer is in support of SkillsUSA and CTE. He voted yes on the original Perkins funding bill.

**Rep. Brandon Williams — met with Bradyn Lawrence.** We had meaningful conversations about how CTE programs help us. He was very interested in how he can support us. Rep. Williams supports CTE and is on many subcommittees that support CTE.

**Rep. Patrick Ryan — met with Callie Lucia.** We asked for the representative's support of Perkins and CTE. We also asked if he would consider joining the House CTE Caucus. Rep. Ryan supports CTE and SkillsUSA. Ms. Lucia was very knowledgeable about CTE. Rep. Ryan has worked with the Education Secretary to ask for more funding, and he supported the Mentoring to Succeed Act of 2023, providing at-risk students with opportunities in CTE to help them find a place in society.

**Rep. Elise Stefanik — met with Zach Deatherage.** We talked about our Framework stories, why we joined CTE and SkillsUSA and why it's important to continue Perkins funding. We invited them to make visits to our SkillsUSA events and schools. Ms. Lucia said that Rep. Stefanik is a strong advocate for both CTE and SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Joe Morelle — met with Jordan Jablonski.** We talked about SkillsUSA and how it plays a pivotal role in preparing students for their future careers by equipping them with essential skills and experiences. The main points covered were a request for advocacy, the impact of SkillsUSA, the importance of the Perkins Fund and an invitation to the SkillsUSA leadership conference. Rep. Morelle supports SkillsUSA and CTE programs via the CTE Caucus and he backs the HR-4371 Act, which strengthens higher education opportunities.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

**Sen. Thom Tillis — met with Cameron Morra.** We talked about the importance of CTE and SkillsUSA. We also told her about the importance of Perkins funding and why the skills gap needs to be closed. We invited them to our state conference and state fair. Sen. Tillis is supportive of CTE.

**Rep. David Rouzer — met with him.** We explained who SkillsUSA serves, how Perkins funding affects us and invited them to our conferences. Rep. Rouzer supports SkillsUSA and CTE. We talked about our mission to close the skills gap in America, and he said he will pass any bills relating to CTE or SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Patrick McHenry — met with Martha Gallagher.** We discussed SkillsUSA, Perkins and how CTE and SkillsUSA are beneficial for the country. We also talked about what made us want to join SkillsUSA. We asked them to support any CTE bill that comes up. Ms. Gallagher was very supportive of everything we talked about.

## **OKLAHOMA**

**Sen. James Lankford — met with Matthew Penner.** We told him our Framework stories, how CTE helps prepare students for the future and how CTE helps to close the skills gap. Matthew Penner assured us that Sen. Lankford has a strong belief in the CTE system and supports SkillsUSA.

**Rep. Josh Brecheen — met with Will DeHaan.** Mr. DeHaan told us that he and the representative support CTE. We talked about how Oklahoma has 69 tech centers. Rep. Brecheen was the state president of FFA in Oklahoma when he was in school. They both agree that CTE is crucial to Oklahoma's economy.

**Rep. Frank Lucas — met with Georgia Davies.** The postsecondary students shared their experiences as CTE students and SkillsUSA officers. The students represented the educational programs of welding, video/audio production and industrial automation. They talked about the need for more classroom space, more equipment and more seats. Small classroom sizes limit the number of adults that can be in the classes. They are proud supporters of CTE in Oklahoma. Rep. Lucas visited some of the technology centers and was impressed with the students and programs he saw.

## **RHODE ISLAND**

**Sen. Reed—met with his office.** We provided examples of how Perkins funding is supporting access to updated equipment in our schools. He is very supportive of SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Gabe Amo—met with his office.** We provided examples of how Perkins funding is supporting access to updated equipment in our schools. He is very supportive of SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Seth Magaziner — met with his office.** We provided examples of how Perkins funding is supporting access to updated equipment in our schools. He is very supportive of SkillsUSA and CTE.

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Sen. Lindsey Graham — met with Kaitlyn Williams and Ryan Mowrey.** We talked about the impact of SkillsUSA, the benefits of being in a CTE course and asked for additional support in the future. Sen. Graham supports funding for schools.



**Rep. Ralph Norman — met with him.** We talked about skills and Perkins and a lot about CTE programs. He supports SkillsUSA and CTE.

**Rep. Nancy Mace — met with Joh Maslyn.** We discussed our CTE programs, SkillsUSA and Perkins funding. We invited them to our fall leadership conference and the state competitions. Rep. Maslyn supports CTE but didn't have much knowledge about SkillsUSA.

## TENNESSEE

**Sen. Bill Hagerty — met with Jillian.** She was very enthusiastic about our message. We told her about CTE and SkillsUSA and why they are important. We told stories of how we got started with CTE and SkillsUSA. She said she supports SkillsUSA's mission and expansion of the Perkins funding.

**Rep. Mark Green — met with Krystina Skurk.** The visit went wonderfully. Ms. Skurk was very open to hearing about the impact CTE and SkillsUSA has on the future generation of America. We explained CTE, SkillsUSA and CTSOs, talked about the CTE Caucus and invited their staff to come to our state conferences. She was very interested in everything.

**Rep. Marsha Blackburn — met with Ian Pigg.** We talked about the economic and workforce benefits of SkillsUSA and CTE. We also discussed Tennessee's industry partnerships. Sen. Blackburn's office has been a long-time supporter of CTE.

**Rep. Chuck Fleischmann — met with Lewis Player.** We talked about what CTE and SkillsUSA are and why they are both important for America's future workforce. We asked him to join the CTE Caucus and to attend the SLSC. The representative is not involved with education, so he didn't have a lot of prior knowledge about CTE or CTSOs, but he was open to learning more.

**Rep. Steve Cohen — met with him.** The meeting was very brief. We finished our talking points, but he didn't seem interested. He is supportive of CTE. He has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has voted yes to bills that support funding for CTE programs.

**Rep. John Rose — met with him.** We discussed the importance of CTE and how SkillsUSA fits into it. We told them how CTE has impacted us, how SkillsUSA prepares students for the workforce, how CTE impacts the economy, how the Perkins funding is used in Tennessee and how Perkins funding translates to CTE opportunities. Rep. Rose has extensive experience with CTE. He and his wife are heavily involved in FFA.

## TEXAS

**Sen. Ted Cruz — met with him and staffers.** We spoke about the importance of Perkins funding and supporting CTSOs. They were aware of how Perkins funds are distributed but were unaware that the funds are not distributed with a focus on success of the programs, but rather by the size of the program.

**Sen. John Cornyn — met with Lily Walsh.** We met in the hallway outside of his office. We had carefully prepared points to share. The aide did not provide much feedback or opportunities to ask questions. Overall, we did an incredible job and felt proud of our efforts.

**Rep. Keith Self — met with him and Chelsea Gomez.** We shared our Framework stories and information about our CTE classes. Our call to action was to continue to support funding for CTE and Perkins. Rep. Self didn't understand CTE and didn't know about SkillsUSA but was impacted by our stories.

## **VIRGINIA**

**Sen. Tim Kaine — met with legislative staffer.** We spoke about the importance of CTE and CTSOs. We asked for continued support and to visit our SLSC. Sen. Kaine is the chair of the Senate CTE Caucus, so he is very supportive of CTE.

**Rep. Rob Wittman — met with him and his legislative aide.** It was a great visit. We discussed CTE and the students told their stories. We were able to have photos taken with Rep. Wittman. He is a big supporter of CTE.

**Rep. Morgan Griffith — met with legislative staffer.** He was very receptive and said that Rep. Griffith is a supporter of CTE. We asked for continued support for CTE and Perkins funding.

## **WYOMING**

**Sen. Cynthia Lummis — met with her.** Sen. Lummis' education aide took notes. We discussed how Perkins funding improves our specific programs across Wyoming using personal examples. We benefitted from visiting with her in person and talked about how Perkins funding improves our specific programs using personal examples. We asked for increased funding of \$35 million to Perkins in the 2025 Appropriations Bill and to oppose cuts to workforce development programs in the same bill. Sen. Lummis is amazing and does support CTE. She also mentioned the importance of CTE teacher preparation.

**Sen. John Barrasso — met with him.** We benefitted from visiting with him in person. We talked about how Perkins funding improves our specific programs using personal examples. We asked for increased funding of \$35 million to Perkins in the 2025 Appropriations Bill and to oppose cuts to workforce development programs in the same bill. Sen. Barrasso would like to see a larger piece of the funding be allocated to Wyoming.

**Rep. Harriet Hageman — met with her.** We benefitted from visiting with her in person. We talked about how Perkins funding improves our specific programs using personal examples. We asked for increased funding of \$35 million to Perkins in the 2025 Appropriations Bill and to oppose cuts to workforce development programs in the same bill. Rep. Hageman will fight for increases as economic development in Wyoming is dependent on a skilled workforce.