



June 21, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, I am writing in support of H.R. 2353, the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*. This legislation provides important educational reforms to fill the need for an in-demand, skilled workforce currently sought by our nation's small businesses. **A vote for final passage of H.R. 2353 will be considered an NFIB Key Vote for the 115th Congress.**

Finding qualified employees is becoming more difficult for small business owners. In NFIB's most recent *Small Business Economic Trends* survey, "quality of labor" ranked as the second-most frequent answer when NFIB members were asked to identify the single most important problem facing their small business. Nearly one in five respondents cited the lack of qualified workers as the biggest problem, while just over half of respondents reported few or no qualified applicants for the positions they were trying to fill. This lack of potential employees is a significant structural problem in the economy that must be addressed.

H.R. 2353 reforms the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act* to prepare potential employees for in-demand jobs. This legislation strengthens engagement between career and technical education providers and local business leaders. This increased coordination ensures students gain skills for jobs that exist in their communities, fulfilling the needs of local small businesses.

The *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* is an important piece of legislation that provides for a more reliable and qualified labor pool for small business owners. **NFIB urges the House to pass H.R. 2353 and will consider it an NFIB Key Vote for the 115th Congress.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juanita D. Duggan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Juanita D. Duggan
President & CEO
NFIB