



Labor and Economic Development

STANDING COMMITTEE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

NCSL Labor and Economic Development Committee Quarterly Newsletter

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FEDERAL UPDATE

Trump Administration Announces New Trilateral Trade Proposal to Replace NAFTA

After a little over a year of negotiations, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. trade officials have agreed to a new trilateral trade proposal. Officially titled the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), it is laid out to update and replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In a joint statement with Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer called the deal “a new modernized trade agreement for the 21st Century.”

According to U.S. administration trade officials, the USMCA “will create more balanced, reciprocal trade that supports high-paying jobs for Americans and grows the North American economies.” Among guidelines, USMCA encourages “United States manufacturing and regional economic growth requiring that 75 percent of auto content be made in North America.” The next steps for final approval of USMCA include ratification from all three governments.

In the United States, it means Congress must approve the new trade deal with an up or down vote. As of now, a vote on USMCA is not going to happen until after the November midterm elections, and will most likely slip into 2019 after a new Congress is sworn in.

Read [official fact sheets](#) on the United States- Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

President Trump Signs Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Reauthorization into Law

On July 31, President Donald Trump signed H.R. 2353, [the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#) into law, reauthorizing the Perkins law through FY2023. This is the first time in nearly 12 years that the Perkins bill has been reauthorized and reformed.

Considered a bipartisan and bicameral effort, both the Chairwoman and ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.)

supported the bill along with Senate Education Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and ranking member Patty Murray (D-Wash.).

The law takes effect July 1, 2019, and will be followed by a transition year, as states develop their plans. The bill aligns Career and Technical Education program standards with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) while strengthening the existing prohibitions on a federal curriculum and mandates. It provides states greater flexibility to allocate funding to target state specific education and economic needs.

Among law changes, “Perkins V” revises requirements related to core indicators of performance, including state-adjusted levels of performance. Each state plan must include measurable indicators of performance, which require each state to make progress toward improving the performance of all career and technical education students. Prior to reauthorization, state plans were authorized for six years; however, the new law only authorizes state plans for four years. Eligible agencies must make their proposed plans available for public comment for no less than 30 days prior to submitting the plan to the US Department of Education Secretary for approval.

U.S. Department of Labor Set to Celebrate Fourth Annual National Apprenticeship Week

The U.S. Department of Labor is gearing up to commemorate National Apprenticeship Week (NAW), a department initiative in its fourth year. Scheduled for Nov. 12-18, 2018, NAW is a national event in which business leaders, and labor and education stakeholders may show support for apprenticeship programs by hosting events such as career fairs, skills competitions, business open houses and apprentice graduations.

According to the department’s [report](#) presented on last year’s NAW, all 50 states participated in commemorating NAW and over 930 individual events were held. The 2017 celebration also hosted the inaugural meeting of [The President’s Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion](#). The task force, chaired by Labor Secretary Alex Acosta, embraces a collective approach dedicated to creating new apprenticeship opportunities to compliment businesses’ needs.

Visit the department’s [Apprenticeship webpage](#) for more information on NAW and the administration’s efforts.

Join the Labor and Economic Development Committee during NCSL’s Capitol Forum!

NCSL and the Standing Committee on Labor and Economic Development (LED) invite you to attend the upcoming Capitol Forum, to be held in Washington, DC at the Hyatt Regency Dec. 5-7, 2018.

The LED Committee will host interactive sessions related to international trade, workforce development, veterans’ entrepreneurship and sports betting.

Visit the official Capitol [Forum webpage](#) for more information.

