

# WORKFORCE

## Rebuild the Construction Workforce and Close the Skills Gap

### Action Needed:

#### Reauthorize the Perkins Act:

- **House:** Thank you for passing H.R. 2353 in June 2017.
- **Senate:** Pass H.R. 2353 and Reauthorize the Perkins Act.

#### Ensure that Executive Order (EO) 13801 Includes Construction

#### Increase Student Access to Job Training Programs:

- **House:** Introduce and pass a House version of the JOBS Act and BUILDS Act.
- **Senate:** Pass the JOBS Act and the BUILDS Act.

#### Included Job Training in any Infrastructure Package

### Background:

- According to an industry-wide survey released by AGC in August 2017, seventy percent of construction firms report they are having a hard time filling hourly craft positions, which is the bulk of the construction workforce. Contractors also view the pipeline for recruiting and training new workers as broken. While many firms are changing the way they operate, recruit and compensate, the chronic labor shortages could have significant economic impacts absent greater investments in career and technical education.

### AGC Message:

- **Support Career and Technical Education for Next Generation of Skilled Construction Workers through Perkins Act Reauthorization.** The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, H.R. 2353 reforms and reauthorizes the Perkins Act, which helps offset the cost of career and technical education (CTE) programs. The reforms include better aligning education with local needs, promoting work-based learning, spurring industry-recognized credentials and providing modest funding increases.
- **Support Increased Access and Funding For Apprenticeship Programs Without Regard to Union Affiliation.** President Trump issued an Executive Order on June 15, which doubles federal apprenticeship funding to \$200 million to be administered through existing programs with a goal of creating five million apprentices in the next five years. The Executive Order gives the private sector more input in designing programs; however, it is unclear whether the construction industry will be fully eligible for these programs. Many have interpreted language in the Order to exclude construction's eligibility because of the perception that registered apprenticeships are already "effective and widespread" in the industry. While certain segments of the construction industry utilize the Labor Department's registered apprenticeship program, not all do. Consequently, all segments of the construction industry should ultimately be able to benefit from the positive changes to the program as a result of the Executive Order.
- **Increase Student Access to Job Training Programs and Non-Traditional Degrees.** The JOBS Act, S.206 supports student access to federal funds for non-traditional four year degrees by authorizing Pell grants for short-term credentials as long as the program leads to a recognized post-secondary credential. The BUILDS Act, S. 1599 provides training grants for in-demand skills. This bill would allow employers to work with communities to ensure job training programs can fill necessary skill shortages. Additionally, AGC is calling on Congress to link job training with any infrastructure bill. Trainees should be allowed to use federal dollars to pay for training programs offered by employers who receive infrastructure contracts.