

The details here are so important, and I want to make it very clear where we landed in this agreement.

To better improve career and technical education for students, workers, local businesses, and communities, this bill will require States, schools, and training programs to update education and job training programs to meet the needs of the local economy, ensuring students are being provided with the skills they need to find high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand jobs where they live.

Because the economy is constantly changing, and new equipment, technology, and curriculum are needed to help students and workers keep up with technological advancements, this bill would authorize a new innovation grant program to allow States to explore new and creative ways to improve career and technical education that use evidence-based measurements to ensure students are still receiving high quality education and training.

Updating career and technical education programs and promoting innovation is important, but we cannot lose sight of our top priority: improving the quality of the career and technical education students are receiving.

For that reason, this bill appropriately balances State and local flexibility with protections and guardrails to ensure our students are receiving the best possible education and training.

I want to dig a little deeper into these protections today because it is so important we get this right.

First, on the role of the Secretary of Education, I want to be very clear: This bill does not prohibit the Secretary's authority to oversee this law in any new way.

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act gives States the ability to determine what education and training is most needed in their communities and what accountability levels those programs have to meet.

At the same time, it ensures the Secretary has the ability and the authority to implement and enforce the law as we intended.

This bill allows the Secretary to issue rules to implement the law, including notifying Congress before a rule is issued and allowing Congress to provide input on those proposed rules.

Second, this bill includes a number of measures to support States and ensure their top priority is student success.

Because regions of the country have different needs and economies, this bill will allow States to set their own levels of performance, but each State must meet minimum requirements when they set those levels of performance, including ensuring our most vulnerable students are making meaningful progress and performance gaps in the States are closing.

Under current law, we have data on performance gaps and disparities, but no one is required to do anything about

those gaps. So for the first time, in this law, States and local recipients will not only have to report data on performance gaps and disparities, they will have to describe how they will address those disparities and gaps.

We also improved the quality of data in this bill. Right now, there are not many common definitions in the Perkins law, so it is hard for local businesses and communities to know which career and technical education programs are high quality and which programs need more resources to improve. This law establishes more common definitions so that the data collected going forward will be more meaningful and comparable among localities and States and will provide more actionable data to help local communities improve these programs.

As I mentioned before, this bill gives States and local CTE providers flexibility to design their own improvement programs for States or locals failing to meet 90 percent of the goals they set for themselves, but it also includes basic requirements to ensure low-performing programs improve in the specific areas they are underperforming, something all parents, educators, and community members want for the programs that serve their children—because, if programs don't have to improve and help the students and workers who need it most, there is no way our communities will be ready for the economic challenges the 21st century holds for us all.

Our bottom line should always be that we support students to succeed. If we aren't, then we have a responsibility to do better. This new law maintains the authority of the Secretary to hold States' feet to the fire to do just that.

Finally, I want to thank my negotiating partners in this legislation, Chairman ALEXANDER, Senator CASEY, and Senator ENZI, for working with me on a bipartisan bill that makes important, needed updates to career and technical education, while maintaining guardrails to ensure States and programs receiving Federal money are focused on providing students and workers with the skills they need and providing businesses with workers they need to compete in the 21st century economy.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the hard work and long hours our staff put in to make this a bill we were all proud to support.

I want to thank David Cleary, Bob Moran, Jake Baker, and Richard Petty from Senator ALEXANDER's office, Garnett Decosimo from Senator ENZI's office, and Julia Sferlazzo from Senator CASEY's office.

I want to thank members of my own staff, including my staff director Evan Schatz, my deputy staff director John Righter, and my education policy director Kara Marchione.

I also want to thank Amanda Beaumont, Katherine McClelland, Katharine Parham, Manuel Contreras, and

Mairead Lynn for their hard work and support.

This law shows that, if we keep students, workers, and businesses at the forefront, we can work together and build an economy that works for all.

Thank you.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT RISK REVIEW MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I wish to enter into a colloquy with Senators CRAPO and BROWN.

The integrity of our elections is a vital national security interest. It is imperative that our elections infrastructure—the technology and services needed to conduct our elections—remains free from foreign influence.

We know that our elections are under foreign threat from cyber attacks and disinformation efforts through social media. Our democratic process can also be manipulated through foreign investments in elections infrastructure. In fact, just this month, the Federal Bureau of Investigation notified Maryland officials that Russian oligarch Vladimir Potanin maintained a substantial investment in a firm used by the Maryland State Board of Elections to register voters and deliver online ballots.

This June, the Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, legislation to enhance our national security by strengthening the review process of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, CFIUS. Specifically, the new law would allow CFIUS to review transactions beyond just those that could result in foreign control of a U.S. business, to include “other investments” by a foreign person in a U.S. business involved in U.S. critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, DHS, includes election infrastructure, such as voter registration databases and associated systems, systems used to manage elections, voting systems, storage facilities for election and voting systems, and polling places, to include early voting locations.

I ask Senator CRAPO, do you agree that critical infrastructure, as defined by DHS, includes certain elections infrastructure?

Mr. CRAPO. Yes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I ask Senator BROWN, do you agree that, once this bill is enacted into law, existing CFIUS authority is broadened to review certain “other investments” involving elections infrastructure by a foreign person?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

ANIMAL DRUG USER FEE AMENDMENTS OF 2018

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the commitment letter