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September 12, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 5587)***

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), representing more than 90,000 local school board members across the nation, working with and through our state associations, supports the “*Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*” (H.R. 5587). We urge the House’s passage of this bill. This bipartisan legislation reflects the concerted effort among our school districts, communities, business and industry, and institutions of higher education to ensure that our students are prepared to succeed in the workforce.

H.R. 5587 includes measures to help our school districts and states strengthen both the academic and technical skills of our students, particularly with the combination of core academic subjects and integrated career pathways. As many of our school districts work to expand partnerships to offer our students a well-rounded curriculum that addresses both college and career readiness, the need to modernize CTE as an integral part of the curriculum is a priority. The bill’s focus on sustainable relationships among stakeholders, local needs assessments, and continuous alignment of programs of study with skills in demand in each state, region, or local economy will help address what a number of employers have cited as a “skills gap.” Further, the bill’s provisions to facilitate proactive career guidance and counseling, dual enrollment, work-based learning opportunities and credentialing seek to strengthen skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and innovation for students.

NSBA’s Center for Public Education has conducted research on career and technical education in its series titled “[The Path Least Taken: Preparing Non-College Goers for Success](#),” in which findings show that advanced courses with an occupational focus make a difference in student outcomes. The synopsis of this research series is that, obtaining “high credentials” – meaning a mix of academic knowledge and job specific, or technical skills, developed in high school plus a professional certificate or license – is key to career readiness for our students.

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NSBA thanks the Committee on Education and the Workforce for its work to strengthen the capacity and performance of our local career and technical education programs, as well your leadership to prioritize consideration of H.R. 5587 during the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Gentzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Thomas J. Gentzel  
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, NSBA