

**NCSL STANDING COMMITTEE on LABOR AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

Chicago, Illinois

July 27-29, 2026

CONTENTS

POLICY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2
POLICY: FOSTERING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.....	9

COMMITTEE: LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

POLICY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TYPE: DIRECTIVE Amendments to section “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization & Funding” sponsored by Committee Co-Chair Utah Representative Thurston.

Amendments to section “National Apprenticeship Act” sponsored by Committee Co-Chair Utah Representative Thurston.

Amendments to section “Responsible Housing and Housing Finance” drafted by NCSL committee staff.

Amendments to section “The Federal Role in Career and Technical Education (CTE)” sponsored by Alaska Sens. Tobin and Kawasaki.

- The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) strongly urges the federal government to better coordinate its economic development activities with the states.
- NCSL urges the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration to each establish a designated liaison to coordinate economic development activities among the four agencies and with the states.

Arts, Culture and Economic Development

- NCSL encourages the federal government to support arts and culture through investments in State and Local programs that will promote economic development, job creation and community revitalization.
- NCSL encourages collaboration and coordination among the Federal Government's disparate arts, culture and economic development agencies as they consider State and local programs ensure that the policy and program outcomes meet the needs and goals identified by state policymakers.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization & Funding

State legislatures play a primary role in setting their state's workforce development strategies and funding programs and initiatives to ensure education and training programs meet their state's workforce needs. State legislators, as members of state workforce boards, are key stakeholders in the success of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

In order to train and maintain a highly skilled workforce NCSL believes that states should be given flexibility to meet the broad goals set out in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and that state discretion to establish and administer workforce development services should be maintained.

A reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act should facilitate a stronger and more involved role for legislatures and legislators in all the states and territories to shape the implementation of authorized programs to ensure their alignment with state workforce strategies, especially those facilitated through complementary state legislation.

To better support statewide coordination, WIOA should support opportunities for states to coordinate and collaborate with higher education on workforce development, as well as promote coordination and alignment between related federal programs such as the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Funding and Programmatic Uses

NCSL believes that the components of an integrated WIOA system should be appropriately funded in appropriation and reauthorization.

~~Reauthorization of WIOA should not include inflexible federal mandates and restrictions on how funds can be used by states and the localities which deliver these services.~~

A reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act should grant flexibilities to states whenever possible to direct funding and develop programs in ways that advance state workforce priorities and legislative strategies, especially by recognizing the opportunities provided through work-based learning and registered apprenticeships.

As technological change, globalization, and industrial transitions reshape labor markets, WIOA program design must recognize the importance of worker-centered, non-discriminatory lifelong learning and support opportunities for workers to reskill and upskill throughout their career for high-demand, high quality, market-driven occupations, including through programs offered by their current employer or as part of effective reentry employment training programs.

WIOA program design should also recognize workers and learners face broader barriers to participation in training programs. WIOA should provide funding and flexibility to allow states to use funding for wraparound services to help workers overcome barriers to participation.

NCSL believes that administrative and technological funding for One-Stops should be central to WIOA appropriation and reauthorization.

Data and Reporting

Federal programs, especially Workforce Pell, increasingly require states to collect and coordinate an increasing array of data points across education and workforce systems, including enhanced wage records.

WIOA should support states in the development of integrated longitudinal data systems that enhance states' understanding of education and workforce outcomes, while protecting privacy and preventing misuse of data. Federal support for state data systems should be commensurate with expectations placed on states.

Congress should provide states with funding to support WIOA data and reporting to include: placement rates, wage outcomes (i.e. pre-displacement wages, post-training placement rates, wage replacement ratios), benefit provision rates, employment classification (full-time/part-time, permanent/temporary), and retention and advancement data.

Federal grant programs that support state data systems, such as the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant at the U.S. Department of Education and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative at the U.S. Department of Labor, should be designed and coordinated in a way that provides maximum flexibility for states to most effectively connect education and workforce data systems. This could include flexibility to develop the infrastructure for state or interstate talent marketplaces that utilize digital learning and employment records.

Additionally, workforce development reporting should be streamlined to ensure high-quality information while promoting program and administrative efficiencies.

National Apprenticeship Act

- NCSL supports federal funding for apprenticeship programs to provide opportunities for adults to earn a wage while they learn a trade or profession.

NCSL supports federal grant funding to expand registered apprenticeship programs in new and emerging industries.

- NCSL encourages opportunities to integrate registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships across federal programs, as appropriate.
- NCSL supports strengthening work-based learning opportunities established under the National Apprenticeship Act, maintaining high quality programs, and joint labor-management partnerships.
- NCSL encourages flexibility within federal standards to promote innovation, streamline administrative burdens, and maintain high quality programs through both joint labor-management partnerships and independent, employer-sponsored apprenticeship models.
- NCSL supports a streamlined federal approval process that eliminates delays and ensures fair, timely access for all qualified program sponsors to help expand registered apprenticeship as a viable option for education and workforce training.
- The federal government should effectively communicate with state agencies on their role in program oversight.

Responsible Housing and Housing Finance

- NCSL encourages the Congress and the Administration to support flexibility and state discretion in housing programs and avoid unfunded mandates.
- NCSL encourages efforts to promote a greater state role in administering federal housing programs, subject to sufficient funding and flexibility.
- NCSL is encouraged and supportive of public private partnership programs and initiatives that increase the availability of financing for homeownership opportunities. NCSL supports first time home buyer tax credits to promote homeownership prospects, preserving the Mortgage Interest Deduction, and low-income housing tax credits that produce new, affordable housing.
- NCSL strongly urges the federal government to consult state legislators and other state officials as voucher program reforms are designed to ensure that they

will meet state needs, provide the flexibility we desire, avoid cost shifts to states, and continue with ample federal funding for program and administrative costs.

- Additionally, we urge the Congress to sustain funding levels sufficient to maintain existing vouchers, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) programs and already committed project based Section 8 subsidies.
- NCSL urges the federal government to respect the primary role that states and localities play in zoning and land use policy. Federal guidance or incentives related to state and local zoning reform must be informed by state feedback and facilitate, rather than mandate, state-led reforms.
- NCSL encourages the federal government to streamline regulations and modernize federal programs wherever possible to support states in expanding the supply of housing.

The Federal Role in Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The federal government should provide additional funding and support the authority of states for flexibility to allocate some funds through a competitive grant administered by the state in pursuit and support of innovative, high quality and effective programs.

- NCSL believes that CTE competitive grant programs should be used to incentivize and modernize state and local programs in order to meet the evolving needs of students. NCSL supports adequate funding for CTE competitive grant programs.
- These funding decisions can best be handled at the state level rather than by individual schools and/or districts.
- States should continue to have the authority to determine the split between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs.
- ~~The existing CTE funding formula for the allocation of federal funds to the state should be maintained.~~

The existing CTE funding formula for allocating federal funds to the state should be amended to include annual increases tied to core inflation.

- Each year under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) and its predecessors, Congress appropriates approximately \$1.4 billion in State formula grant funds under Title I (Basic State Grants) to support students who enroll in career and technical education programs and programs of study.
- Because funding levels have not kept pace with inflation and there is a growing demand for CTE education and workforce programs across the country, it is essential that Congress provide increased support for Perkins Act-funded programs.
- Increased funding for programs that prepare students for highly skilled jobs aligns with the Workforce Pell provisions in HR 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB), allowing students to receive Pell Grants to attend high-quality, short-term career and technical education programs. Previously, Pell Grants could not be used for short-term CTE programs.

COMMITTEE: LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**POLICY: FOSTERING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

TYPE: MEMORIAL RESOLUTION (sponsored by Oregon
Senator Starr)

WHEREAS, the citizens of the United States and Canada mutually benefit from a robust
relationship in several areas, including but not limited to—

Economic security;

Energy security;

National security;

International security;

WHEREAS, at a time of global conflict and uncertainty,

(1) the United States enjoys sharing the world's longest border with its close
friend and ally, Canada

(2) the two nations share three oceans: the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Arctic

(3) the two nations ensure that legal trade and activity across maritime and land
borders proceed smoothly, while stopping threats such as terrorism, drug
trafficking, and human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, the United States and Canada share many cross-border cultural
exchanges in fields such as athletics, music, film, and religion. These exchanges serve
to enrich the relationship between the two nations; and

WHEREAS, Canada and the United States host hundreds of thousands of each other's
students each year, and this educational exchange strengthens binational ties,
cultivates a shared pool of skilled talent, and builds lasting cultural and professional
connections between the two nations; and

WHEREAS, the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec participate in NCSL's International Affiliate Member Program, which provides a unique platform for both national and subnational governments to strengthen ties with U.S. states, enabling a deeper exchange of ideas, best practices, and mutually beneficial policies, including a renewed emphasis on global economic collaboration and trade; and

WHEREAS, the United States is Canada's largest trading partner in goods and services, and each Canadian province and territory maintains significant trade relationships with individual U.S. states, including-

- 1) Alberta, whose top five trading partner states are Illinois, Texas, Minnesota, Washington, and Oklahoma;
- 2) British Columbia, whose top five trading partner states are Washington, California, Illinois, Oregon, and Texas;
- 3) Manitoba, whose top five trading partner states are Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, and North Dakota;
- 4) New Brunswick, whose top five trading partner states are Texas, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire;
- 5) Newfoundland and Labrador, whose top five trading partner states are Texas, New Jersey, California, Massachusetts, and Delaware;
- 6) Nova Scotia, whose top trading partner states are Massachusetts, Illinois, South Carolina, Texas, and New York;
- 7) Ontario, whose top five trading partner states are Michigan, Texas, New York, Ohio, and Illinois;
- 8) Prince Edward Island, whose top five trading partner states are Texas, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, and Florida;
- 9) Quebec, whose top five trading partner states are Texas, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Ohio;
- 10) Saskatchewan, whose top five trading partner states are California, Minnesota, Illinois, Montana, and Texas;
- 11) Northwest Territories, whose top trading partner states are Washington and

60 Florida;

61 12) Nunavut, whose top trading partner states are Texas and Florida;

62 13) Yukon, whose top five trading partner states are Alaska, Texas, Washington,
63 Alabama, and Illinois; and

64
65 **WHEREAS**, the United States and Canada are global leaders in technology and
66 innovation, and together, can make the North American continent the most
67 economically competitive region in the world for emerging technologies such as artificial
68 intelligence; and

69
70 **WHEREAS**, The United States and Canada;

71 (1) are equally committed to protecting global security and promoting democracy
72 across the globe.

73 (2) work together within global institutions such as the Group of 7, Group of 20,
74 the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and
75 Development, the World Trade Organization, and the Organization of American
76 States to advance democracy and human rights; and

77
78 **WHEREAS**, Canada and the US are each other's largest foreign supplier of energy.
79 This relationship allows the U.S. and Canada to not rely on adversarial nations for
80 energy security and economic growth; and

81
82 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
83 Legislatures reaffirms its strong support for the enduring partnership between the United
84 States and Canada; and

85
86 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of
87 State Legislatures encourages continued collaboration between the two nations in
88 trade, energy development, and technological innovation to enhance mutual economic
89 growth and competitiveness; and

90
91 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of
92 State Legislatures supports ongoing joint efforts between the United States and Canada
93 to promote global security, democratic governance, and respect for human rights; and
94

95 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of
96 State Legislatures recognizes the importance of maintaining and strengthening cross-
97 border relationships at the federal, state, provincial, and local levels.
98

99 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State Legislatures
100 reaffirms its commitment to fostering a strong, cooperative, and forward-looking
101 relationship between the United States and Canada, and supports continued efforts to
102 deepen collaboration in economic growth, technological innovation, and the promotion
103 of shared democratic values.