



June 24, 2019

The Honorable Jason M. Lewis
Chair, Joint Committee on Education
24 Beacon St., Room 511-B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Alice H. Peisch
Chair, Joint Committee on Education
24 Beacon St., Room 473G
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Lewis and Chair Peisch:

On behalf of the Commonwealth's MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers, we write to express our support for House Bill 3756, *An Act to increase student access to career technical education schools and programs which are aligned with regional labor market trends*, filed by Representative Brodeur and Senator Lewis.

The Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA) is the voice for the Commonwealth's workforce development system, encompassing an array of partners and stakeholders, including the MassHire Career Centers and Workforce Boards. MWA provides a unified voice for the state's regionally-led workforce development system to ensure it is responsive to the dynamic demands of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers, and youth throughout the Commonwealth.

In 2018, the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education (AVTE) released a white-paper on High Quality Career and Technical Education in Massachusetts. Their research indicated that career technical education (CTE) programs deliver tremendous value statewide to students, families, communities, and employers. Graduates of CTE programs: (1) secure high-wage jobs; (2) possess strong academic, technical, and professional skills; (3) are well prepared for further training in skilled occupations and careers and; (4) enroll in and graduate from 2 and 4-year post-secondary schools. Increasing access to CTE is an important goal of AVTE and MWA.

H.3756 can play an important first step in creating additional CTE pathways for youth throughout the state by:

- Integrating CTE more explicitly into the mission of DESE through the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner for Career Technical Education and the establishment of an Office of Career Technical Education. By working with the MassHire Workforce Boards on an annual basis to determine the labor market needs in their regions, the Office can make sure CTE programs are aligned with regional demand. This will allow students to learn the skills that are most needed



by businesses in their area, and it will ensure that employers are able to find the qualified talent needed for job openings.

- Implementing a pilot program, through DESE, to incentivize collaboration between high schools offering Chapter 74 programs and those that do not have the same access to skill-training and career options. For example, a student could attend a comprehensive high school in the morning for academics and a voc tech school in the afternoon for a specific CTE program. This type of innovative programming ensures more students are exposed to the types of critical skills that will help them succeed in life.

The Commonwealth faces a skills gap that MWA and its members are dedicated to addressing. By increasing access to CTE, we can help ensure that teens and young adults get the skills and experience demanded by employers. We ask that the Committee give a favorable report to H.3756.

Thank you for your support of the state's workforce development system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tonja Mettlach', is written over a white background.

Tonja Mettlach
Executive Director
Massachusetts Workforce Association