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Good Morning Madame Chair and Committee members:

Thank you for allowing me to be here today to talk about this Bill.

My name, introduction- including current job and previous job... 20 years working providing oversight and guidance to intra curricular career and technical student organization...

I think we all understand how important CTE is and that it directly impacts our workforce needs AND based on the creation of this law in its current form; we all also understand, that sometimes, unfortunately the burden of education costs are passed on to the student and their family. To ensure I make the most of our time together, I am going to provide you some context and scenarios illustrating the impact of adding this language.

The first scenario- and one near and dear to my heart, CTSOs- career and technical student organizations. CTSOs are unique because they are intended to be integrated into the classroom and align with CTE curriculum. Setting aside the membership cost (ranging between 6 and 20 \$ per student); CTSOs also have skilled competitive event conferences; even with our CTSOs trying to keep costs down for participation- this usually has a price tag ranging from 150.00 to 225.00. This is a chance to a student to showcase their trade and technical skills, competing with students around the state. Many of the contests are hosted at industry sites- giving the student an opportunity to network with industry professionals, in many cases these interactions lead directly to jobs. At these conferences, students also learn workplace skills, sometimes called soft skills. But this sort of meaningful participation only happens when the student can afford it.

Another scenario is experiential and work-based-learning, also frequently part of CTE programs. These experiences provide students real-life career exposure; they include job shadowing, industry tours and more immersive experiences including internships aligned with their CTE class. The expenses that accompany these range from transportation to safety equipment to acquiring certifications. Again- these experiences only happen if the student can afford it.

I know some of you maybe concerned allowing this credit to be used for CTE may encourage schools to shift costs to the student verses them being paid out of alternate funding sources, like Perkins. That is already happening.

- First, federal funding for CTE known as Perkins funding, can't pay for most of these expenditures because individual student expenses are not considered allowable.
- Second, Minnesota's Perkins consortia structure is such, that each district makes decisions (independently) on how to use it; so while some schools may use Perkins funds for allowable expenses related to CTSOs, many do not because they are not able.

A lot of districts are forced to use the bulk of their Perkins funding to pay for "the basics" of CTE including classroom equipment and salaries for CTE teachers. This is especially true in smaller and rural districts. This leaves those schools and CTE programs at a disadvantage- and students are not able to fully participate.

We say we want to bring industry standards into the classroom to make sure learners are "workforce ready". Well that's expensive. When we say we want to ensure students have an opportunity to engage in real-world, work-based learning - that's expensive.

Expanding the use of this tax credit would help "level the playing field" for many students. We all want to ensure we are DOING ALL WE CAN to help young people be prepared for 21st Century workforce. And right now, we are falling behind. We know when a student is able to fully participate in a CTE program, there is a 93% program completion and high school graduation rate, in comparison to 80%. And when we look at experiential learning programs, it's even higher- there was a study that came out in the Journal of STEM Outreach in 2021, 97% of the students pursued a career aligned with their experiential learning experience.

Research aside- Changing this language to include CTE, will not only help students and their families; it will have a significant impact on addressing Minnesota's workforce needs. I am happy to take any questions.