

# CA CAPITOL — TO — CAPITOL DC

## WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION TEAM

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## ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

More than half of school districts in the nation report teacher shortages. The lack of quality and diverse teaching staff severely harms student achievement, especially for students of color and those with special needs. A Department of Education survey from August 2022 found schools have, on average, three unfilled teaching positions. Additionally, the nation and regions continue to grapple with challenges recruiting and retaining Career Technical Education (CTE) teachers due to low pay that is not commensurate with wages available in other industries. Programs with demonstrated industry demand are frequently forced to close when CTE teachers are unavailable, with STEM, Health Science, and Manufacturing continuing to experience the largest shortages. Furthermore, the region and nation are experiencing a critical shortage of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers needed to provide quality education and care for our talent base. Preschool teachers' median hourly earnings are just 45% of the living wage for a one-adult, one-child household.(1) Because workforce development, preK-12 education, and higher education are interconnected and complementary, leaders representing each of these areas across the Sacramento region urge members of Congress to adopt thoughtful legislation that sustains and enhances the success of every student from cradle to career, including the ongoing training for adult learners for competitiveness, with the following actions:

### Requested Actions

- Broaden federal support for the education workforce by offering tax relief, fully funding Title II and eliminating bureaucratic barriers
- Expand the Teacher Quality Partnership and Grow Your Own programs with added benefits to further recruit, train and retain both CTE and ECE teachers
- Clarify, simplify, and expand loan forgiveness, include for CTE and ECE teachers

### Brief Background

Broaden federal support for the education workforce by offering tax relief, fully funding Title II and eliminating bureaucratic barriers.

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Use the federal income tax system to provide additional credits to educators, including CTE and ECE teachers, and double the Educator Expense deduction from \$300 to \$600 per year and index it to inflation. With attrition in many hard to fill teaching categories, the growth of special education staffing needs, and projected staffing demands for early education and mental health supports, full funding of Title II is needed to provide supplemental activities that strengthen the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders including induction programs, professional development. These activities support professional growth, equitable access to quality educators, and recruitment for hard-to-find educator positions. Congress should provide incentives to states to create teacher interstate licensure compacts and rural and targeted placements to encourage high quality, diverse teacher talent to grow learning communities and networks.

Expand the Teacher Quality Partnership and Grow Your Own programs with added benefits to further recruit, train and retain both CTE and ECE teachers.

Work-based learning is a proven, effective vehicle to engage low-income, diverse applicants into career pathway programs. The teaching profession is no different. In order to ensure the representation in teaching staff that is essential for minority students, expansion of work based learning programs is needed. As one of the only programs providing teacher stipends, Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants provide wages during a residency or student teaching year, which allows low-income individuals to pursue a career field that would otherwise be inaccessible. Unfortunately, the stipend level has not kept pace with cost of living, and the overall program is funded significantly less than when originally created. Additionally, funding Grow Your Own programs provides the flexibility needed for local districts and jurisdictions to address the specific challenges they face in diversifying and expanding their teaching pipeline. With the significant shortage of teachers, these are two vehicles to ensure quality, comprehensive training is accessible to all who want to join the field.

Clarify, simplify, and expand loan forgiveness, include CTE and ECE teachers.

Broaden qualifications for federal loan forgiveness programs, including Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program (TLFP) and Federal Perkins Loan Cancellation. Shorten the time for full forgiveness in the PSLF program to five years. While TLFP allows up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness, the majority of teachers fall into subject areas that only qualify for \$5,000 in forgiveness. We request increasing the loan forgiveness amounts for all categories and expanding loan forgiveness to graduate level loans. We should also expand Federal Perkins Loans to allow for teaching in postsecondary schools. In all programs, wherever possible, the process for documentation should be simple and streamlined. Congress should also consider suspending payments for, or making payments for, teachers currently serving until full forgiveness is achieved, or extend the current freeze on student loan payments for teachers including ECE and CTE instructors.

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1. Early Childhood Education Workforce Needs Assessment, October 2022 - <https://www.valleyvision.org/resources/early-childhood-education-workforce-needs-assessment/>

*2023 Capitol-to-Capitol*

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