

Castle Named Key Negotiator on Legislation to Help High School Students Improve Educational Experiences, Career Choices -- July 12, 2006

Washington, D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, the lead sponsor of the House bill to reauthorize vocational education guidelines, today was appointed to the Conference Committee on the legislation, which will reconcile differences between the House and Senate bills. As a conferee Rep. Castle will have a great deal of influence over the outcome of the measure, which reauthorizes the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Conference discussions are expected to begin soon.

"I am delighted to be appointed to the Conference Committee on this legislation which is responsible for the funding of more than \$1 billion to these career-oriented programs in schools. There are students involved in this program at all levels and stages of their academic career, and hopefully the comprehensive bill we put together in Conference will vastly improve the educational expectations and standards for these students.

Currently, under the Perkins program, the federal government provides \$1.3 billion to states and school districts to develop career-oriented courses and curricula, for purchases of technology and other purposes. Additionally, the program Tech Prep provides around \$100 million per year for state and local efforts to cultivate partnerships between high schools and postsecondary institutions.

Some of the points of discussion in Conference will focus on whether to require local vocational education programs to meet state academic standards or run the risk of losing federal funding and whether to continue the separate funding stream for Tech Prep, instead merging it with the state-grant program.