



To: Members of the House Committee on Workforce & Talent Development

From: Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan, Detroit Regional Chamber, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Home Builders Association of Michigan, Lansing Regional Chamber, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Chemistry Council, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association, Michigan Manufacturers Association, Michigan Restaurant Association, NFIB/Michigan, Small Business Association of Michigan

DATE: June 12, 2018

RE: **SUPPORT Senate Bills 175, 684 and 685**

Our organizations represent a wide array of Michigan job-providers, but we have one thing in common: talent is a top priority for our members. Michigan businesses need world-class talent to compete in a global economy. Our members, small and large, are dedicated to policies that develop a strong and diverse talent system and provide learning opportunities with employer engagement to prepare students to succeed.

There are currently more than 100,000 open positions on the Pure Michigan Talent Connect website and it is estimated that the professional trades will add 15,000 new jobs each year through 2024. This alarming trend is only growing. As the large Baby Boomer generation retires, they take their skills with them, leaving not only empty jobs, but a skill deficit.

To address the talent shortage, we must increase student awareness of rewarding and lucrative career opportunities and allow Michigan students to develop skills at a younger age that can carry them into the workforce and give them a competitive advantage when choosing a career path.

The stakes are extraordinarily high. The future quality of life in Michigan depends on our collective ability to develop, attract and retain top-tier talent. Developing the talent pipeline is the key to our state's success. To achieve that, we need to do a better job of building collaborative relationships between parents, students, teachers and employers to reveal the many rewarding career pathways available to students.

The bills on today's committee agenda all work towards supporting that goal:

- **Senate Bill 175** eliminates the sunset on the provision passed in 2014 that allows Career and Technical Education (CTE) students flexibility in achieving their foreign language credit. SB 175 will strengthen CTE programs and afford students more opportunities for training and career exploration through stronger CTE programs.
- **Senate Bills 684-685** afford students more opportunities for Career Exploration, promote awareness of diverse career opportunities and build collaborative relationships between parents, teachers and job-providers.

To provide students with increased educational options as they position themselves to join the workforce, whether in skilled trade disciplines or jobs requiring undergraduate and graduate degrees, our organizations ask that you **SUPPORT SBs 175, 684 and 685.**