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WOMEN WORK!
The National Network for Women's Employment

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Contact: Erin Mohan
Policy Director
(202) 467-6346

Perkins Act Reauthorization Will Help Women and Families Succeed

WASHINGTON, DC — After years of effort by Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment and other advocates for career education, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act was signed into law by President Bush over the weekend. The law renews \$1.3 billion in grants for high schools and community colleges to provide individuals with the academic and technical skills needed to succeed in high-skill, high-wage careers. It also takes several positive steps to ensure that women in transition have greater access to the career education system.

"The reauthorization of Perkins is a major victory for women," said Jill Miller, Women Work! President and CEO. "As the nation's largest network of women's education and training organizations, we have seen what strategies work to help women secure well-paying employment; Perkins' focus on education, training and essential supports like child care and career counseling is on track to make an immense difference for women and their families."

The law requires local organizations use funds to prepare special populations – including single parents and displaced homemakers – for high-skill, high-wage or high-demand occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency. This change from the previous version of the law will increase opportunities for women to enter and advance in a wide range of employment sectors including those occupations typically dominated by men.

"Without Perkins funding, our single parent training program and several programs for training women in nontraditional careers simply would not exist," explained Deb Holst, faculty member at Women Work! member organization Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, NE. "The hundreds of women we serve rely on Perkins to remove the barriers between poverty and success!"

The law also affirms that Perkins funds can be used by local programs to provide support services that remove barriers to participation in education and training programs.

"Perkins funding enables Women Work! member organizations around the country to address women's career training needs and to provide the essential services – child care, transportation and counseling – which enable them to successfully complete their education," said Miller.

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Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities. For more information about Women Work! visit: www.womenwork.org.