



Friend,

Ensuring our children have an education system that sets them up for success and prepares them for secondary education or the workforce is incredibly important. However, recent challenges like recruitment issues, teacher shortages, undeveloped Career and Technical Education (CTE) and STEM programs, and rising mental health concerns amongst students have taken a toll on Virginia schools. The recent Nation's Report Card (NAEP) shows significant declines in student performance in math and reading during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the setbacks experienced by students across the Commonwealth.

We must work to find solutions to these educational challenges and provide students with multiple avenues to success and workforce readiness. **Throughout my time in Congress, I have either proposed or supported multiple bills that will bolster our education systems and provide students with more opportunities to become equipped for higher education and the workforce:**

- I introduced the *PROPEL Act*, which gives students the freedom to use Pell Grants for short-term vocational or technical training, apprenticeships, or on the job training.
- Signed on as an original co-sponsor of the *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act*, which permits the use of 529 savings accounts to cover the cost of certain workforce training, credentialing programs, and costs associated with certification exams and maintaining certification credentials.
- Supported the *Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022*, which includes support for programs to help children who are struggling with stress, anxiety, and social anxiety which were exacerbated by school shutdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening Virginia's education system is essential to fostering innovation and promoting our nation's economic security. I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure our students have access to quality

education, career-developing programs like STEM and CTE courses, and are receiving appropriate mental health support so that they are ready for the demands of our workforce.

Sincerely,
Rob