

**Testimony of Roger Tadajewski
Executive Director, National Coalition of Certification Centers
Before the Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives**

“Innovative Approaches to Meeting the Workforce Needs of Small Businesses”

September 8, 2011

Good afternoon Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Velázquez and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss this important issue.

My name is Roger Tadajewski and I am the Executive Director of the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3). NC3 was established to address the need for strong industry partnerships with educational institutions in order to develop, implement and sustain industry-recognized portable certifications that have strong validation and assessment standards. NC3 members have an opportunity to take a national and international role in shaping industry-driven training policies for today and the future.

NC3 is the outgrowth of the relationship between Gateway Technical College (GTC), located in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Snap-on Inc. This year, GTC is recognizing its 100 years of service to the greater southeast region of Wisconsin. GTC has been part of many business cycles over the last 100 years, and has always responded with innovative approaches to meet the workforce needs of both local business and national industries.

As we know, the current business cycle has been very challenging. GTC believes that working with business and industry to understand new and emerging technologies and the impact on local and national workforce issues is critically important and helps to develop the types of training that students will need to be good candidates for employment.

For example: the transportation, aviation/aerospace and energy industries are continuing to improve and integrate new and emerging technologies in the commercial marketplace, industry and retail maintenance and repair services and manufacturing processes. These new technologies and processes create the need for the current and emerging workforce skill sets that demonstrate “what you know and what you can do” utilizing technology to improve productivity and processes.

Innovative approaches to implement and sustain strong business, industry and educational partnerships is required to meet today’s needs and future job growth, for both the current and emerging workforce.

New opportunities exist for small business to engage with the colleges nationally to develop advanced technical training for students and instructors and enhance the image of all aviation/aerospace, energy and transportation related programs. Additionally, these

efforts will have a positive cascade effect down to high schools and middle schools. This, in combination with the congressional efforts that focus on increasing community college training for new and transitioning workforce and to ensure that this new workforce is highly skilled in the use of technology and processes, provides an even greater scope of opportunity.

Many college presidents are proactive to this need, but cannot do it alone! They are asking “What do I do? How do I do it? Who can help me?” The ability today and in the future to provide guidance and professional direction on technology certification, facility layout, tooling, equipment, training and technology to college presidents, administrators, directors and department chairs will provide a pathway to developing strong small business and educational partnerships that are sustainable.

As our nation’s credit markets continue to stabilize, small businesses will have the ability to grow. They will need a skilled workforce with transitional skill sets, stackable credentials that allow for increased productivity and the ability to adapt to new materials, processes and future technical career pathway opportunities. To accomplish this end, the nation’s community and technical colleges will need to continue to build and sustain partnerships with small businesses and industries.

Current status:

Significant accomplishments have already been achieved in the aviation/aerospace, energy, transportation and manufacturing areas.

GTC has implemented strong partnerships with local business that lead to industry certifications that are transitional across multiple industries. They have also championed an effort to work collaboratively with other community colleges across the nation.

Working with local small business owners, GTC developed innovative approaches to ensure that graduates of GTC have key certifications that meet the needs of employers. These approaches included identifying key areas that small businesses needed. One area included new employees demonstrating that they were proficient in the use of equipment that is computer/diagnostic and or process driven. Some of these skill sets, like torque and use of electrical measurement equipment, are now being taught for use in multiple industries and job descriptions. This is one example of many areas that small business is looking related to the emerging workforce.

GTC, along with several other community colleges, the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the National Collation of Certification Centers (NC3) and other partners have begun a national approach to implement and provide a national model to sustain long-term, high impact job-training initiatives across the country.

Industry is becoming more vocal about the need to develop and implement industry recognized certifications and education training strategies in the coming years. Their view on this is driven by the demand to replace the current retiring workforce with advance trained, skilled workforce.

Key activities that are in process include developing core certification centers nationally over the next three years, identification and engagement of additional schools to participate and work with these centers, and development of training materials and processes. This effort also will include leadership activities to engage college presidents, high school and middle school principals.

Working with community college and high school instructors in every state over the next five years, providing them with a full depth of knowledge of stackable credentials, local business and education partnerships and how to transfer that knowledge to their students produces the kind of alliance that will generate and sustain employment growth in the long term.

I would like to suggest the following recommendations that Congress consider supporting:

- 1) Support initiatives that provide better long-range planning for employer/employee needs:**
- 2) Support and encourage activities to align community college academic programs with business and industry-led nationally portable, industry-recognized certificates and credentials**
- 3) Support and recognize small business and industry efforts and investment to develop and implement industry-led national portable, recognized certification and credentials that are delivered in collaboration with education**
- 4) Support, encourage and recognize small business entrepreneurship partnership efforts with education to train the new and emerging workforce**
- 5) Support federal initiatives such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which ensure rigor and provide needed skill-sets**

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.