



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Senator Valesky, Assemblyman Brindisi Promote Legislation to Address Skills Gap Through New Career and Technical Education Diploma Pathway

DAVID J. VALESKY March 6, 2014

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ALBANY, NY—State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) and Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi (D-Utica) stood today with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to promote legislation they sponsor (S5966/A8189) creating a new specialized educational path to train students to fill the growing number of jobs in New York in manufacturing and high-tech fields.

The legislation creates a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) diploma to provide an alternative pathway to a high school graduation that incorporates career-focused education classes and curriculum into school programs with the goal of producing more highly skilled workers for New York State's technical and manufacturing industries.

“Manufacturing and technical professions require a different skill set today than 20 years ago, and employers have told us they are having difficulty finding qualified applicants,” Senator Valesky said. “This legislation will provide a pathway for students in high school who want to enter these highly specialized fields to acquire knowledge, skills, and work experience to become the next generation of leaders in these growing industries.”

“One of the first things we learn in school is our ABC’s,” Assemblyman Brindisi said. “Senator Valesky and I are tying this plan to those three letters. Through advocacy, business outreach, and community engagement with our schools and students, we will continue pushing New York State to pass this proposal with flying colors. We want more students to hold a diploma that will lead to a good paycheck, and we want our manufacturers to get the trained workers they need to grow.”

Statistics illustrate the adverse effects of the skills gap in growing industries. A 2011 study by the Manufacturing Institute showed that 83 percent of manufacturers surveyed are finding it difficult to hire qualified employees. With a nationwide 8 percent unemployment rate, thousands of people are unemployed, yet many companies are struggling to fill open positions due to a lack of skilled workers.

“21st century industries--nanotechnology, photovoltaics, plastics technology, optics--need a qualified workforce to be able to grow; logically, investing in this workforce will provide the basis we need to strengthen the manufacturing industry in New York State and provide a catalyst for economic development,” Senator Valesky said. “This legislation would enable

students to get hands-on, applied education at the high school level to meet the demands of companies, preparing them to either work in the field, enter apprenticeship programs, or continue to college.”

Specifically, the legislation adds a new section to education law that would result in either a regents or local diploma but with different requirements, including completion of a CTE sequence, completion of a technical assessment, completion of work-ased learning, and completion of an employability profile. It would be available to all students, and include the fields of: agriculture education, business and marketing education, family and consumer sciences education, technical education, and trade and industrial education. The Board of Regents would develop the regulations necessary to establish the curriculum and assessments.