



**PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**  
*Best People. Best Practices:*



HEATING AIR-CONDITIONING REFRIGERATION DISTRIBUTORS INTERNATIONAL



March 29, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
Chairman, House Education and Labor Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, Chairman Scott, and Ranking Member Foxx:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our shared support for legislative proposals that increase funding for existing career and technical education (CTE) programs, as well as policies that would provide affordable tuition options for individuals who complete qualifying heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) technician training and certification programs.

Collectively, the organizations signed onto this letter, represent the many facets of the HVACR industry, including equipment manufacturers, distributors, contractors, engineers, trainers, and educators. In the United States alone, the HVACR industry generates approximately \$256 billion in annual economic activity and employs more than 1.3 million people, a number that includes many highly skilled, and licensed, contractors and technicians.

The ability of manufacturers to succeed in the highly competitive global marketplace depends on continued access to an educated, diverse, inclusive, flexible, and knowledge-based workforce. American employees, in turn, need the education and skills to participate in a high-performance workforce for the robust and dynamic U.S. manufacturing economy.

Unfortunately, the HVACR and water heating industry has been facing a serious shortage of skilled trade employees for several years and has more recently been exacerbated by the overall shortage of U.S. workers. There is a broadening skills gap due to several factors, including: the retirement of the baby boomers, advancements in technology that require new skills, increased job competition in the global marketplace, failure to cultivate a highly skilled workforce, difficulty in retaining skilled talent, a societal focus only on four-year degree programs to the exclusion of technical education, and a lack of emphasis on the necessary skill sets for advanced manufacturing. Of these, the last two are most critical to ensuring innovative, high efficiency products are able to be manufactured and installed properly.

In response to these issues, our organizations respectfully request policymakers support and encourage students who choose to enroll in community college, or other CTE programs, that prepare and qualify individuals for careers as HVACR technicians and potentially small business owners by providing these students with affordable tuition options.

We believe this approach will incentivize individuals who may be considering a career in the HVACR and water heating industry and will help establish an adequate labor supply for both manufacturers and the public. Further, developing and growing a strong contracting, installation, and maintenance workforce is necessary to ensure heating, cooling, and water heating equipment can continue to be safely and efficiently installed in residential and commercial buildings.

Qualified contractors, who complete the required licensure and certification programs, can help maximize the safety, energy efficiency, and consumer comfort of installed equipment by ensuring equipment is properly installed and functioning as designed. Individuals that pursue these careers can see many benefits that include, but are not limited to: stable employment, good wages and benefits, avoidance of student debt, and ability to start working while still being trained.

Thank you for your leadership, and we greatly appreciate your consideration of these important issues. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI)  
American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)  
Geothermal Exchange Organization (GEO)  
Heating Air-Conditioning Refrigeration Distributors International (HARDI)  
International Ground Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA)  
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Organization (PHCC)  
Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES)