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Thank you, and good morning. My name is Matthew Stodola and I am currently a senior at Woodinville High School in Woodinville, WA. I am here today to let you know how Career and Technical Education, and more specifically Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), has made a difference not only in my life, but in the lives of my peers.

The Mission of FBLA is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. Many other CTSO programs seek similar goals.

What is truly remarkable about how these different organizations go about achieving their goals, is that fact that they teach students in an environment that coaches the proper direction. Students learn, hands on, the skills necessary for success, such as leadership, dedication, self-reliance, and discipline. But these skills are not handed to them; students that join CTSO programs must work and see the potential within themselves, gaining these valuable traits along their journey.

Personally, I have benefited from this style. Being in FBLA for three years I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the program. When I began high school as a sophomore I was quite, unassuming, and insignificant. After being in FBLA and seeing that I was someone who possessed the keys to become something substantial, I transformed into someone who is, voiceful, proud, and noteworthy. It's this inner realization that drove me to become a state officer and to excel in school. I have seen this process happen often over my years of service, and when someone realizes that they do possess the potential to better themselves, the look on their faces is worth all of the hours.

FBLA has also affected the path that I, and my fellow students, chose for our future education. Personally without the motivation of FBLA I would have never considered going into business, or applying to the school of my dreams. Just as it is with others at my school, these CTSO programs provide a sample of possible career paths, and they give the students access to the skills needed for career success, such as social and work-management skills.

I urge you to support these CTSO programs, because they continue to transform the people that we are and the people that we will become. Depriving one person from their inner potential is like depriving the future of its potential.

Thank you.