

Hello, my name is Kerry Montgomery and I'm an Air Force veteran of 9 years. The job I had in the Air Force was not a marketable trade in the civilian world and when I separated in 1996, I worked in the computer chip manufacturing field at Micron technology and then I eventually moved back to Portland to work at Waker Siltronic making computer chip substrate for the computer chip industry. These were both decent jobs, but not something that I felt was a career path for me due to the volatile nature of the computer chip market and high potential for lay-offs. Essentially, prior to Tri-Met I did not have any training in turning wrenches.

In 2000 it was brought to my attention Tri-Met had apprenticeship programs in the maintenance field and I would be able to use my GI Bill to assist in purchasing tools needed for the job. I was hired as a maintenance helper in November 2000 and worked for approximately 2 years cleaning buses before I was able to get into the heavy-duty diesel apprenticeship program. This apprenticeship teaches you about all aspects of bus maintenance and the other apprenticeships at Tri-Met teach all aspects of their respective specialties. After graduating in 2005 I worked on the floor as a diesel mechanic for approximately 9 years. During that time, I learned from the more seasoned mechanics about older technology and I taught them about more updated technology that I learned about the current bus fleet which created a self-perpetuating learning experience. After 9 years working as a bus mechanic, I wanted to further my career and applied for the assistant supervisor position. This position is considered a subject expert and the highest position you can achieve as a union member. I have been an assistant supervisor for approximately 7 years.

The apprenticeship program provides an opportunity to all walks of life in our community without having prior experience. Through my years at Tri-met we have graduated people from all walks of life that are under-represented in this career field. To lose this program would be a detriment to not only Tri-met but also our local community. Please support SB 670.

Thank you for your time.