

Submitter: Scott Rogers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB518

March 02, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and members of the Committee; thank you for the opportunity to testify before you regarding Senate Bill 518.

Scott Rogers, Athena, Oregon – Professionally, I am a Senior Project Manager for a Construction Management firm based in Pendleton and a Certified Professional Public Buyer; in my personal capacity, I am a 12-year board member and current Board Chair for the Athena-Weston School District in Umatilla County, and have proudly served on the Oregon School Boards Association Board of Directors for 8 years and am the immediate past president.

I am testifying today in opposition to SB518 as it is currently presented; while I am a staunch proponent of Career Technical Education and providing career pathways for our young people into the trades - in rural Oregon, the current iteration of SB518 would serve to negatively impact both parties which it is intended to benefit.

SB518 does not take into consideration that, with few exceptions, all of the apprenticeship programs are based in the Portland Metro area or along the I-5 corridor; this creates an undue burden on our small, independent contractors and sub-contractors, many of whom are already struggling with finding qualified tradespeople and apprentices. This would serve to act as a deterrent to bidding on projects, even if they might be the only qualified shop in the community – i.e.

Enterprise Electric in Enterprise could not bid on the work in their own town, for their own District.

Additionally, it places the burden of reporting and accountability on the District themselves – in many cases, it would fall squarely on the Superintendent or Facilities Manager to validate apprenticeship programs; these staff are already overburdened and this would place further burden on them. While the goal to “encourage” contractors to develop apprenticeship programs, if they are running a small business this is another “thing” to add to their already lengthy list.

I have the pleasure of working with many smaller contractors and sub-contractors: Marv’s Glass in Milton-Freewater which is a wonderful, small family-owned door and window sub-contractor and a huge advocate for the Milton-Freewater Unified SD - the only apprenticeship program is in Gresham.

Houk Masonry, another small family owned business which does a lot of work in rural Union and Umatilla Counties – the only masonry apprenticeship program is in Portland.

Thews Sheet Metal in Pendleton, which has done a lot of work throughout Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Baker Counties – the only HVAC apprenticeship program is in Portland.

Ultimately, this bill will create further challenges for rural Oregon, reducing competition and driving up construction costs for our Public Schools. As Morgan Allen with COSA spoke regarding the OSCIM program, funds are already tight – this will only further increase construction costs for our rural schools.

I plead with Senate Education Committee – the intention of SB518 is valid, however if the intention is to encourage young people to pursue careers in the trades, and provide opportunities for employment in our communities, please invest in training facilities in rural Oregon, particularly in eastern Oregon.

Sincerely

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