

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee:

As the Chair of the West Linn-Wilsonville school board, I am in my 8th year of holding office and I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 518.

I am fortunate to serve in a community where our voters have passed capital bonds every 5 years since 1997.

In 2014, our voters passed a capital bond that resulted in \$94.5 million dollars spent.

In 2019, our capital bond was a \$206.8 million dollar bond.

I worked on both of those capital bond campaigns and I approved all of the contracts that our district put in front of us.

That is over \$300 million dollars spent in West Linn-Wilsonville and I have played a part in all of that spending.

Imagine the lives and the families we could have impacted if SB 518 had already been in place.

Imagine if we could go back and ensure that each of those jobs had 15% apprenticeship on site. Would we have been able to do more to ensure a more readily available construction trades workforce today?

I believe so.

Since I was elected to the board in 2015, I have been asking the district to do more to recruit workers on school district projects that are minority, women and from other historically underrepresented communities in the construction workforce.

Over the years, I have been told that there simply aren't enough in the market. If that is indeed true, then it's time we fuel the demand and more intentionally support efforts to grow a skilled workforce pipeline that is inclusive and equitable.

After many years and several turn overs of board colleagues, we are at a point where our administration is speaking to their efforts to recruit a more diverse workforce. There are even stats and numbers showing up in reports. I give our administration credit for their efforts, and for listening.

And It took years of diligence on my part to get to that level of commitment within my district.

And after 8 years of conversations, we are on the brink of being able to propose something to the board to develop our own policy that would require that our capital bond projects have 20% apprenticeship.

This took my unwavering passion for the topic. A passion that is rooted in knowing that we can **do our best** in the K-12 world, but when our youth leave our schools, they need opportunity in our communities. Some are college bound, some are not.

Apprenticeship programs provide a pathway for a strong family wage job right here in our state. Diversity, equity and inclusion recruitment efforts that are an explicit and intentional goal ensures that these opportunities are available to all, regardless of their background.

I urge the Senate Education Committee to support Senate Bill 518. Many school boards will not have a person like me to advocate for apprenticeship and diversity and equity efforts. Many school boards are supporting capital bond projects, support creating opportunities for all our youth, and want to create opportunities right here in our communities with our dollars.

Let's make it easy for our public dollars to go to work doing the right thing for our youth and their families.