

Submitter: Larry Williams  
On Behalf Of: Self  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On  
Transportation and Economic Development  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5015

Chair Gomberg, Chair Woods, and members of the committee,

I support both the Governor's Recommended budget and the additional requests of the Commissioner of Labor.

In particular, I would like to encourage the reclassification of current Apprenticeship Representatives; creation of a Mediator (or an Ombuds) position for construction workers to address ongoing problems with harassment, discrimination, and threats to psychological safety; and budget authority for the CHIPS Child Care approved as HB 4098 in the 2024 regular session.

With regard to the reclassification of Apprenticeship Representatives, I worked under that classification from 1997 to 2010 (after which I took another position with the Apprenticeship and Training Division). In that time, there were major changes in 1997 (enactment of ORS 660.014 and elimination of what at the time had been called "selection method D," a.k.a. an "intent to hire), in 2008 with the federal revisions to 29CFR29, and in 2016 with federal revisions to 29CFR30. The job classification did not change over that time to reflect the growing complexity of the position.

With regard to the creation of a Mediator (or an Ombuds) position for construction workers, I have managed a program at BOLI on behalf of the Oregon Department of Transportation (and in cooperation with other public partners, such as the Department of Early Learning and Care, Portland State University, and Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU. We have improved recruitment, preparatory training, and completion rates for diverse apprentices in highway construction trades through a combination of pre-apprenticeship (particularly for women), social supports (e.g. coaching and guidance), child care subsidies, and hardship assistance. Still, our program evaluation has found that jobsite culture and experience continue to pose a significant barrier to retain apprentices and complete them at higher rates to make better use of our public investments. Regardless of the title, the position should have investigative authority equivalent to a state-appointed Ombuds and be able to encourage use of resources through the Respectful Workplace Initiative that is under development. Information about that effort can be found here: <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-institute-occupational-health-sciences/respectful-workplace-initiative-workplace-climate>.

With regard to the CHIPS Child Care Fund, BOLI was able to establish an

Interagency Agreement with Oregon Business Development Department in December 2024 and expect to execute an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Early Learning and Care. This will allow child care subsidies to be expanded to apprentices in all construction trades and to provide child care subsidies to new journey workers in construction trades in workforce regions that support the expansion of the semiconductor industry. The budget authority allows the agency to replicate the successful child care subsidies previously provided for apprentices in targeted highway construction trades with ODOT.

Thank you for your consideration.