

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee, for the record my name is Ashley Lautenschlager, I am a registered apprentice with the Ironworkers Local 29 and a graduate of the U-PACT pre-apprenticeship.

I was incarcerated for 5 years at Coffee Creek. At first, I took my sentence as a punishment. Then I realized that I could use that time as an opportunity to change my life for the better if given the right opportunity. U-PACT was that chance. Not only did they teach me the ways of the trades, set me up for success when I got out by paying for my tools, boots, and everything I needed to go right to work. I was released July 5, 2024, and went straight to work. Now I am making over \$30 an hour with employer paid health care and retirement benefits, have my own place, my own car and was invited back to Coffee Creek as a guest speaker to show what the program does for people!

I think funding for this program will help reduce recidivism. Everyone says they want to focus on rehabilitation and not just punishment in the prison system. Well, coming from there personally, this is one of the only programs that actually sets you up for success after you parole. Literally all you have to do is show up everyday ready to work. This program changed my life. Please consider continuing fully funding this program to hopefully change a lot more lives in the future. Thank you for your time.