

Testimony of Minna Long – HB 5004

Journeyman Ironworkers, Ironworkers Local 29

In 2017, I graduated from the Trades Related Apprenticeship Coaching (TRAC) program at the Washington Corrections Center for Women. TRAC is an Oregon and Washington state-recognized apprenticeship preparation program that trains individuals for entry into multiple trades. I fell in love with Ironwork and joined Local 29 after my release in 2018.

TRAC enabled me to face reentry, conviction history, and single-motherhood head on. Because of the training, mentorship and bridge to community that TRAC gave me, I have been able to turn my life around, care for my children as a single parent and even purchase my first home. Today, I work for the Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council and chair our Second Chance Committee. I go back into prisons to visit AIC's participating in these kinds of programs to share my story and provide hope and mentorship.

Washington state not only has TRAC located inside both of its women's prisons, but it also has at least six state-recognized apprenticeship preparation programs inside the men's prisons, and one inside the juvenile facilities. There are countless success stories attributed to these programs, mine is merely one of them. I have lost count of the number of union members in positions of leadership who have conviction history. Programs like these change lives and reduce recidivism.

It is my sincere hope that the Oregon Legislature will support UPACT by appropriating funds to keep it going. I also respectfully ask that this Legislature not be discouraged by UPACT being in its infancy. This program will have a return on investment and create success stories like we see in other states.

Thank you for the work you do for Oregon and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Minna Long