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Testimony on in Support of HB 3881

(Your Name)

March 19, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz and Members of the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3881. My name is _____ and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of (Org & brief background).

I/we are writing in support of HB 3881, which would ensure that certain K-12 school construction projects utilizing State Treasury funds meet minimum registered apprenticeship employment standards and encourage efforts to recruit historically underrepresented workers in the industry. School construction—today one of the largest and most consistent areas of public works investment throughout our state—has no uniform minimum standards for apprenticeship utilization or workforce participation goals, and this bill would help change that. HB 3881 will align public school construction projects with current statutory requirements that apply to state agencies, public higher-education and community college construction funded by Oregon taxpayers.

➤ **Key Points to consider (choose at least 1-2 to integrate):**

- State registered construction apprenticeship programs provide high-quality, rigorous “earn while you learn” training through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on experience and are a proven method for developing the skilled workforce to meet ongoing industry needs.
 - Apprenticeship programs support viable career pathways into the construction industry and family-wage jobs, but there must be commitment on the part of project owners and contractors to connect apprentices with consistent work opportunities in order to obtain the hours required to complete their training and, in turn, advance in their careers.¹
- Across the country, the construction industry is seeing employment growth and apprenticeship program enrollment in Oregon has expanded 62% over the past decade, while construction jobs in our state are projected to increase 13% by 2033.
 - K-12 public school construction project owners have a powerful opportunity to further support this skilled training continuum, by ensuring minimum requirements for work hours that must be performed by apprentices on applicable projects.
- Having access to living-wage careers is perhaps the most important way workers can build generational wealth. By prioritizing good-faith efforts for the recruitment and retention of people of color, women, and veterans, we can better ensure that public investments in school construction help make Oregon a place where these projects actively improve the lives of those who have historically been underrepresented in the industry.
- Washington, California and Nevada have all established apprenticeship utilization requirements in their state laws covering K-12 school construction that either align with or otherwise exceed the minimum standards that HB 3881 proposes.
- HB 3881 does not create a wholly new set of standards that are without precedent. The bill extends the same minimum apprenticeship utilization requirements and workforce recruitment goals that *already apply* for bidders on state agency construction projects, as well as applicable higher-education and community college projects which utilize State Treasury Funds.

¹ For the Laborers’ apprenticeship, apprentices must complete 4000 hours of on-the-job training and 360 hours of related training (including classroom portions) in order to become full journey workers.

<https://oregonlaborers.com/process/>

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- In recent years, our state’s public education system has brought increased focus to expanding access to construction trades careers as a viable pathway for students:
 - As of the 2023-24 school year, 85 construction related CTE programs were offered in high school throughout Oregon², reflecting a renewed emphasis on preparing students for apprenticeship training and possible future employment in the industry.
 - HB 3881 aligns well with this core value proposition and further reinforces the overall goal of developing the next generation of skilled construction workers throughout our communities.
- The bill will help ensure that contractors who bid on public projects are those prioritizing on-the-job apprenticeship training and actively working to cultivate the skilled construction workforce that is crucial for building and maintaining the vital infrastructure throughout our communities, going forward.
- It is important to remember that many community-funded school bonds are eligible to receive matching grants from the State through the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program³, in addition to the funds they raise locally.
 - As such, it is not only reasonable to require these minimum standards, but it is in the best interests of the hard-working Oregonians who build our educational structures to support quality learning outcomes and equitable access to construction career opportunities.
- Construction apprenticeships have been shown to produce a robust value and strong return on investment for industry employers--with one key industry study finding that structured apprenticeships increase productivity by 11% and retention by 14%, while decreasing on-the-job injuries by 26% and rework by 23%.⁴
 - For approximately every dollar invested in registered apprenticeship, on average, employers can see a return of \$1.30 to \$3.00 through improved productivity and reduced turnover.⁵

[Insert any organizational/individual perspectives or stories related to the issue here]

Oregon’s K-12 public schools are entrusted with a fundamental mission to educate the next generation of our state and prepare students to pursue next steps towards fulfilling careers that enable the foundation for a decent life and stable communities. HB 3881 deepens this mission by requiring our educational institutions to actively support the ongoing training needs of our vital construction workforce, which will benefit workers, businesses, and the economic prosperity of our state broadly.

I/we (org name) urge your support for HB 3881.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

² Milshtein, Amy. “Building the Future”. *Oregon Business* (May 3, 2024). <https://oregonbusiness.com/building-the-future/>. Accessed Mar. 10, 2025.

³ Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching (OSCIM) Program). Oregon Department of Education. <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/pages/oscim-program.aspx>. Accessed Mar. 10, 2025.

⁴ Clark, Matthew. “A Compelling Case for Construction Craft Training: The Return on Investment is Real”. *National Center for Construction Education and Research* (Feb. 7, 2024). <https://www.nccer.org/newsroom/a-compelling-case-for-construction-craft-training-the-return-on-investment-is-real/>

⁵ “Benefits of Apprenticeship”. *North America’s Building Trades Unions* (March 3, 2017). <https://nabtu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Benefits-of-Apprenticeship.pdf> (Accessed Mar 10, 2025).

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