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Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Munoz and Elmer, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2688.

As part of a state-registered apprenticeship program, I am currently being trained to be the skilled workforce of the future. I know from my experiences on jobsites and in the classroom that building high-quality infrastructure that is both safe and durable requires a skilled workforce

Traditional construction work is largely moving to offsite work as technology advances and shifts toward modularization, and Oregon's prevailing wage law needs to be updated to ensure that it is still effective and operating as intended. We are already doing offsite fabrication work, and most of the companies that are developing and implementing modularization practices are union and already pay the prevailing wage rate on off-site fabrication.

From my perspective as a registered apprentice, I know firsthand that modularization is a great way to open more opportunities for apprentices like me to get into a career where I can learn in a safer environment and get used to some aspects of the work, especially when I have access to full-family health insurance, free training, and retirement with prevailing wage.

Research shows that Oregon's Prevailing Wage Rate Law has positive impacts on the Oregon economy. Prevailing wage helps to level the playing field, boosts investment in apprenticeship training programs, improves productivity and worksite safety, and stabilizes construction costs.

I ask for your support of this policy to ensure our laws keep up with technology and we continue to promote opportunities for state-registered apprentices to earn as they learn.

SMART Local 16 Apprentice

Print Name NICK BATES

Signature 