



Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Munoz and Elmer, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 2688 and the -3 amendment.

There is continuous talk from some groups that there is a workforce shortage in the construction industry, but these same groups consistently choose to oppose apprentice utilization requirements and prevailing wage—policies that research has shown to help to grow the local workforce. A 2021 study by the U of O LERC found that in 2019, Oregon had 12 registered apprentices per 100 construction and extraction workers, while Idaho had fewer than 6 apprentices per 100 construction and extraction workers<sup>i</sup>. Idaho has no state-specific prevailing wage laws, so only federal funding would trigger the Davis-Bacon Act. HB 2688 would help increase apprenticeable hours on public works projects for both Union and open shop apprentices.

As a state-registered Ironworker apprentice, I must complete at least 6,400 hours of on-the-job training along with at least 800 hours of classroom instruction to even take the journey level test. These work hours come from both public and private works, typically over our 4-year program. As an Oregon taxpayer, I hope that public owners and legislators use our tax dollars to invest in jobs and career opportunities for Oregonians that will help build a skilled and local workforce. These high-quality jobs also help build a strong local tax base for future projects and needs.

Updating our prevailing wage laws to capture offsite fabrication is in line with what Oregon values reflect. Economic research finds that prevailing wage laws increase apprenticeship training, boost worker productivity, and reduce injury rates in construction. Please vote yes on HB 2688.

Thank you,

*Hermenegildo Zacarias*

<sup>i</sup> [The Impact of Oregon's Prevailing Wage Rate Law, January 2021](#)