



Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 460. The Ironworkers Local 29 strongly oppose the bill as drafted.

While we can only speak for our BOLI registered pre-apprenticeship programs, which include a 4-week ironwork specific pre-apprenticeship and a 12-week 3-craft pre-apprenticeship in the prison system, we do not bring pre-apprentices on jobsites to work on public works or private jobs. The goal of pre-apprenticeship programs is to prepare folks for success in a registered apprenticeship program through hands-on training and classroom instruction—not to degrade prevailing wage laws by creating another classification of worker, as SB 460 aims to do.

Additionally, it is important to Local 29 to note for those not as familiar with the industry that registered apprentices need documented work hours to advance through their apprenticeship program along with classroom hours. If passed, SB 460 could actively undercut registered apprentices' ability to progress through their apprenticeship and get consistent pay raises as contractors may shift towards using only pre-apprentices to reduce labor costs.

Pre-apprentices for our programs represent a diverse segment of the population and help to expedite achieving a more diverse workforce and ideally future contractor base. Furthermore, it's not a secret that registered apprenticeship programs offer a great pathway to the middle class. However, while the pre-apprenticeship classes are free and often provide more than \$1,000 in wraparound services to individuals who complete the program—we frequently hear that taking unpaid time off from work is a barrier to entry for pre-apprentices or folks looking to enter into a pre-apprenticeship.

If the goal is to help prepare Oregonians for registered apprenticeship or other similar programs, then let's have a conversation around expanding UI benefits for Oregonians who quit their jobs to enter into a pre-apprenticeship. Or the legislature could look at additional funding for programs like the Build Oregon initiative, with which we and other pre-apprenticeships partner to help provide a weekly stipend to pre-apprentices and benefits like tools, boots, and lodging while they are in class. Further depressing wages for folks in a pre-apprenticeship looking to improve their careers is not a good use of the legislature's time. Thank you.

Lorne Bulling
Political Director, Ironworkers Local 29