



Service Employees  
International Union  
Local 503

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To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

From: Mike Powers, SEIU Local 503

RE: Oppose SB 460

Date: April 1, 2025

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Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Powers, and I represent SEIU Local 503. Our Union stands with about 70,000 workers across every county in Oregon. We are the people who care for your loved ones, ensure food safety, protect our communities from wildfires, and more. Many of our members are also tradespeople, masters at the quick fix and innovative solutions. We oppose SB 460, which would exempt pre-apprenticeship trainees from prevailing wage laws.

Registered apprenticeships are the gold standard for workforce development because they provide fair wages that support workers as they train. We are concerned that creating an exemption for pre-apprenticeships undermines this system by introducing a lower-paid workforce, which employers may prioritize over fully certified programs. Over time, it may weaken apprenticeship quality and job opportunities.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are often designed to open doors for historically underrepresented groups, including women and people of color. Paying these workers less than the prevailing wage deepens existing inequalities, making it even harder for them to afford necessities like rent and food while they train.

Prevailing wage laws are in place to ensure that government-funded projects uphold strong labor standards instead of driving wages down. Allowing contractors to pay pre-apprentices less creates a loophole that may let them sidestep fair pay laws, ultimately harming both new and experienced workers.

We fully support pre-apprenticeship training – and only when there is a clear, transparent pathway to full apprenticeship and mastery of the trade. Instead of slashing wages, the state could invest in these programs through expanded tax credits, grants, and union-contractor partnerships that share training costs.

Exempting pre-apprentices from prevailing wage laws may erode industry standards, encourage worker exploitation, and weaken fair labor practices. To build a stronger workforce and protect Oregon's workers, we must ensure that all labor – including pre-apprentices – is compensated at the prevailing rate.

We urge a “no” vote on SB 460.

Thank you for your consideration.