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**Haley Percell**

TO: House Committee on Rules  
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, Director of Government Relations and Communications  
DATE: May 16, 2025  
RE: HB 3881

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 3881. I write today to share OSBA's concerns regarding the bill.

OSBA believes that students should be encouraged to explore potential careers in the trades and we recognize how critical the trades are to Oregon's economy. Our position on HB 3881 is not a reflection of our policy priorities related to career pathways, but rather our commitment to stretching dollars as far as they can go for students.

As you are likely aware, the state does not include funding for school facilities as part of the State School Fund distribution that districts receive. Rather, districts are dependent upon their local voters to approve bonds in order to upgrade and repair school buildings. The state does provide limited grants to districts for seismic rehabilitation and matching funds up to \$12 million through the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching (OSCIM) Grant.

Since 2020, 56% of efforts by local school districts to pass bonds have failed at the ballot. In many communities, it is incredibly challenging to win voter approval. Especially in economically depressed areas, folks are reluctant to raise their own taxes, when their own budgets may already be stretched thin.

HB 3881 requires that 15% of work hours on a school capital project be completed by apprentices. In many parts of our state, there are no local apprentices available to meet this requirement. The inability to meet this requirement will make it harder for local contractors in areas where apprentices are not plentiful to bid on school projects and/or they may have to rely on pulling in workers from other parts of the state.

In some districts it is the knowledge that the bond will spur economic development in the local community that helps it pass – including the knowledge that it will provide work for local folks in the construction industry. Our fear is that if districts—especially rural and remote districts—have an increased likelihood of relying on contractors from outside of the community for their bond projects, their communities will be even less likely to vote in favor.

We appreciate the intention behind the -2 amendment to limit the scope of the requirement to only funds provided directly by the state through the OSCIM Grant, rather than applying to the entirety of a district's bond. However, the OSCIM Grant represents a large chunk of the project budget for many of our smallest districts. In

effect, the amendment gives the greatest relief to larger, more urban districts that may already have such a focus on apprenticeship in their contracting process.

At this point, this policy seems a bit cart-before-the-horse. We should focus on increasing apprentice training opportunities outside of the I-5 corridor, especially in eastern Oregon. Until we know that we have adequate numbers of apprentices in all parts of the state, we would like to see the language in the bill be changed from a requirement to an aspiration, or to see an exemption for districts that don't have an adequate number of apprentices within a reasonable radius of their location. We would generally consider a reasonable radius to be a distance that is drivable for a daily commute.

We understand the goal of ensuring that we have a robust pipeline of trades workers in Oregon. OSBA would be happy to engage with the proponents of the bill further about how we can partner toward that goal. However, with no outreach prior to the session and limited opportunities to consider mutually-agreeable alternatives, OSBA remains opposed to HB 3881.

Thank you for your consideration.