



August 2, 2018

Senator Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Hearing on “Modernizing Apprenticeships to Expand Opportunities”

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC), I am submitting this letter for the record of the “Modernizing Apprenticeships to Expand Opportunities” hearing, held by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on July 26, 2018.

TAUC represents over 2,000 union construction firms engaged in industrial maintenance and heavy construction, and is the largest multi-craft union contractor association in America. TAUC’s mission is to serve as an advocate for contractors who utilize union labor, and to enhance cooperation between the three entities involved in the successful completion of construction projects: the contractor, the building trades union, and the owner-client (the company for which the work is being completed). This “tripartite dialogue,” facilitated by TAUC, delivers the cost-effective, high-quality construction demanded by our members’ owner-clients.

TAUC contractors employ skilled, union craft personnel on construction and maintenance projects in order to deliver value to their clients. These union men and women, who build and maintain the most critical elements of our nation’s industrial infrastructure, are among the most well trained and highly skilled construction industry professionals in the world. They ensure our members provide the safest, highest quality, and most cost-effective construction services to their customers. These skilled construction workers attain their high level of proficiency by participating in rigorous joint labor-management registered apprenticeship programs.

Joint labor-management apprenticeship programs consist of a number of elements including academic instruction; hands-on training in the proper physical execution of tasks; physical observation of skilled crafts men and women performing tasks correctly; and a minimum of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training where skills learned in the classroom are performed in the field under professional supervision.

It is important to note that these joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, as well as the life-long skills they provide participants, are privately funded by signatory construction

contractors. TAUC members and other union construction contractors jointly operate with their labor partners over 1,100 apprenticeship training centers nationwide, and make private investments of approximately \$1.3 billion a year in workforce training and apprenticeship programs. These programs, which do not rely on taxpayer dollars, ensure that their graduates have the skills necessary for contractors to deliver safe, high quality construction services to their customers. Skilled labor is vital to the success of our industry, and our members have invested heavily in apprenticeship training programs for well over 65 years.

As the Committee continues to explore policies to expand opportunities for apprenticeships and training, we urge you to acknowledge the unique nature of the existing, rigorous construction industry apprenticeship program and the investment TAUC members have made in their workforce. The joint labor-management system has a proven track record of delivering privately funded, innovative, and effective high skilled training programs which produce the highest quality craft personnel in the construction industry. Modernizing apprenticeship and expanding training opportunities does not require Federal taxpayers to subsidize contractors who make little or no investment in their workforce. Any policy changes to modernize apprenticeship programs and expand training opportunities should build on the existing construction industry's privately funded, joint labor-management apprenticeship and training system.

While our members provide this training without Federal subsidies, these programs depend on the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to ensure the quality of the apprenticeship and training opportunities being provided. We urge the Committee to continue to ensure that DOL has the tools and the resources to maintain and strengthen the quality and rigor of apprenticeship programs and opportunities.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony for this important hearing and thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the Committee to strengthen apprenticeship programs and ensuring that our members rely on.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen R. Lindauer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen R. Lindauer
Chief Executive Officer

SRL/trm