



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Department of Labor and Training

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Daniel J. McKee
Governor
Matthew D. Weldon
Director

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Anastasia Williams
Chair, House Committee on Labor
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: 2022 H 7027

Dear Chair Williams:

I write today in support of 2022 H 7027 – An Act Relating to Public Properties and Works – Labor and Payments of Debts by Contractors, by Rep. Edwards.

For many years, I have stressed the benefits of registered apprenticeship and touted apprenticeship programs as the best model of a career pathway that we have in workforce development. While engaged as an apprentice, workers have the opportunity to earn while they learn and see their careers blossom before them as they attain measured and appropriate milestones in their training. As Director of the Department of Labor and Training (DLT), I am proud to support apprenticeship programs in the building trades and in non-trade occupations through the many workforce initiatives that we are involved with for a simple reason, they work.

Construction, like many occupations, faces an aging workforce and a growing demand for talented folks. Apprenticeship is the answer. This legislation would require contractors bidding on school construction contracts valued at \$5,000,000 or more to have an approved apprenticeship program for all apprenticable crafts to be employed on the project. This requirement will encourage the continued development of registered apprenticeship programs for workforce development needs, filling the talent pipeline for our building trades and providing meaningful career opportunities for Rhode Islanders. There are appropriate exemptions in the bill for small contractors and DLT stands ready to provide technical assistance to any contractor that seeks to develop apprenticeship programs or navigate the requirements of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at matthew.weldon@dlt.ri.gov or (401) 462-8870.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Weldon
Director