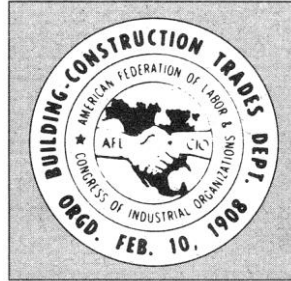


Michael F. Sabitoni
President

RHODE ISLAND

Scott Duhamel
Secretary/Treasurer



BUILDING TRADES

February 2, 2022

Hon. Anastasia Williams
Chairwoman
Committee on Labor
State of Rhode Island House of Representatives
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for: H-7027; An Act Relating to Public Property and Works

Dear Chairwoman Williams:

The Rhode Island Building & Construction Trades Council is comprised of sixteen (16) unions representing approximately 10,000 local skilled craftsmen and women. On behalf of our organization, I write in support for this Bill, which will require contractors and subcontractors on school construction projects over \$ 5.0 million to participate in formal, registered apprenticeship training programs.

The RIBCTC and our signatory contractors have long recognized the value of using apprenticeship training in our industry and utilize these programs as a vital tool for ensuring quality service to our construction clients, including public bodies in our state. In fact, cumulatively (our 16 unions and signatory contractors) we invest more than \$3.0 million in training—every year.

There are many logistical factors supporting the skill training policy promoted by this Bill. Construction is both a high skills and labor-intensive industry, which means that the craft labor employed can effectively make or break any major project. Requiring firms to participate in apprenticeship training programs addresses this issue by providing effective quality control over the entire construction workforce. It is, therefore, not surprising that *in industry surveys, over 90 percent of contractors using these apprenticeship programs report that they would recommend them due to the immense benefits they provide. For these reasons, at least 14 states, including Rhode Island, have incorporated apprenticeship programs into their main public works programs.*

Extending this policy to school construction at a time when our economy needs to develop skilled labor makes perfect sense. Such projects are critically time-sensitive, rendering timely schedule compliance essential. Rhode Island taxpayers expect their schools to be completed on time as delays result in major problems for educators, students and parents. Further, like other sectors, school construction is becoming increasingly complex and challenging. As a result, craft

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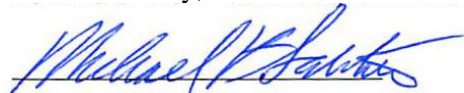
personnel must have first-rate skills and training in the latest equipment, materials and procedures, as well as a working knowledge of sophisticated industry codes and standards. Apprenticeship training is by far the best way to ensure all craft personnel are properly trained and qualified to successfully perform this work.

Further, in considering this Bill, we also urge the General Assembly to recognize that expanding apprenticeship policy will unquestionably strengthen the state's construction industry and a vibrant construction industry is vital to the state's overall economy. Indeed, these factors are core building blocks needed for future economic growth insofar as they impact Rhode Island's top priorities, including the following:

- Rebuilding and modernizing critical state and local infrastructure systems;
- Promoting major commercial projects and emerging technology industries;
- Supporting the development/acceleration of renewable energy sources;
- Fostering government-supported economic development programs; and
- Expanding the Rhode Island's partnership with the U.S. government.

Every one of these vital policy goals is directly dependent on a resourceful, dynamic construction industry, which in turn relies on a well-trained, highly skilled construction labor force. Enacting this legislation provides another integral step in this process it will help bolster apprenticeship training initiatives critically needed for the future. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Sabitoni
President

cc: Committee Members
RI Building and Construction Trades Council