

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

LABOR AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA

MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
ROOM 60 EAST WING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2019
9:30 A.M.

PRESENTATION ON
HOUSE BILLS 1746, 1840, AND 2041

BEFORE:

HONORABLE JIM COX, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE CRIS DUSH
HONORABLE TORREN ECKER
HONORABLE BARBARA GLEIM
HONORABLE DAWN KEEFER
HONORABLE RYAN MACKENZIE
HONORABLE DAVID MALONEY
HONORABLE LORI MIZGORSKI
HONORABLE ERIC NELSON
HONORABLE MICHAEL PUSKARIC
HONORABLE PAUL SCHEMEL
HONORABLE PATRICK HARKINS, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE MORGAN CEPHAS
HONORABLE MARIA DONATUCCI
HONORABLE LEANNE KRUEGER
HONORABLE JEANNE MCNEILL
HONORABLE DAN MILLER
HONORABLE ED NEILSON
HONORABLE ADAM RAVENSTAHL
HONORABLE PAM SNYDER

COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:

JOHN SCARPATO

MAJORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JONAS RICCI

MAJORITY RESEARCH ANALYST

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*Pennsylvania House Of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

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SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Good morning. I'd like to call this meeting of the House Labor and Industry Committee to order. At this point, I'd like you to rise as able and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited)

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: First, I'd like to welcome everyone to this hearing of the House Labor and Industry Committee. At this point, I would like to also announce that the meeting is being recorded so please silence your cell phones or any other electronic devices you may have with you.

And I'm going to ask my secretary to please call the roll.

(The roll was taken)

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: All right. Thank you.

We've called this hearing today to discuss three pieces of legislation that relate to our state apprenticeship and training law: House Bill 1746 sponsored by Representative Gleim, House Bill 1840 sponsored by Representative Struzzi, and House Bill 2041 sponsored by Representative Tobash.

We hear a lot about wages and the job market and everything else. As we looked at what the House Labor and

1 Industry Committee could do, one of the things we really
2 began to understand is how important apprenticeships are
3 and the vital role that they play. And so we took a look
4 at the legislation that we had before the Committee and we
5 decided to go ahead and have a hearing so we could find out
6 the ins and outs -- the good, the bad, the ugly, if you
7 will -- about apprenticeships and how they could
8 potentially benefit the economy here in Pennsylvania, and
9 those who are trying to make family-sustaining wages to get
10 their lives started or to progress to that next step.

11 So at this point, I'd like to ask the prime
12 sponsors of each of the bills to briefly take two, maybe
13 three minutes to make some opening remarks about their
14 bills. We won't take questions on the bills themselves at
15 this point. We'll allow as much time as possible for the
16 other testifiers, but if you could provide a brief
17 introduction of what your bill does and then we'll move
18 right into the testimony from there.

19 We're going to go ahead and start with
20 Representative Gleim.

21 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Thank you, Chairman.

22 After working within the construction field for
23 years, I realized the need for a bill tailored to
24 Pennsylvania that doesn't pit industry and unions against
25 each other and that reforms the very old 1961

1 Apprenticeship and Training Act in a safe and efficient
2 manner. Thus, I wrote House Bill 1746.

3 Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation with
4 a 4:1 journeymen-to-apprenticeship ratio for merit shop or
5 non-union programs. Most states have a 2:1 or a 3:1, and
6 therefore, we are not growing at the same rate as other
7 states which is helping to create our workforce skills gap.

8 Also, as part of my work on the Education
9 Committee and touring workforce with the Policy Committee,
10 it's very apparent hearing from the people that schools
11 have stepped up to the plate in creating workforce pathways
12 only to hit a bottleneck related to this particular law
13 which, if changed, could open up the workforce to more
14 apprenticeship programs and, thus more apprenticeships.

15 So in the spirit of 1746, I have set a maximum
16 ratio based on the federal guidelines of what constitutes a
17 high-, medium-, and low-risk occupation which is attached
18 to your copies in your packets. Everything in pink is high
19 risk, yellow is medium risk, and green is low risk.

20 My bill takes all of the high-hazard occupations
21 below a 9.1 fatality rate -- and that's all the way on the
22 right-hand side of that piece of paper. You can go all the
23 way down and hit 9.1 on the right-hand side of the pink
24 page and draw a line under it. Everything under 9.1 places
25 those industries, those occupations, in the medium-risk in

1 order to capture more mechanics and CDL operators, mainly,
2 which is what our state, I think we can all agree,
3 desperately needs. This bill eliminates the disparity
4 between union and non-union by tying the programs to the
5 prevailing wage practice among union programs. Whatever is
6 set by the prevailing wage contract is what the non-unions
7 are also allowed to use as well.

8 Finally, my bill provides an avenue for small
9 businesses to grow in PA. The old 1961 law does not state
10 how a company just starting out is supposed to get to a 4:1
11 or a 3:1 or a 3:2, no matter what it is. Labor and
12 Industry has stated in a recent meeting that a journeyman
13 only needs to ask the board for an exception, yet I have
14 not found one exception to have been made to a non-union
15 shop for a new program. I've asked them to bring that data
16 today if they have it; however, there would be no need of
17 any of that under my bill because this sets the limit at a
18 1:1 for the first three apprentices and a 3:2 ratio after
19 that for a company under 50 employees.

20 I'm very interested to hear the testimony today
21 and I'm willing to work with all stakeholders to make this
22 legislation work and be the bridge to compliance between
23 1961 and 2020 while considering safety, growth, and
24 fairness to all workers and businesses trying to attract
25 and train the talent that they need. Thank you.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you, Representative
2 Gleim.

3 Next, we'll hear from Representative Struzzi.

4 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Good morning, everyone. So my bill, House Bill
6 1840, quite simply requires that the Department of Labor
7 and Industry review whether the state Apprenticeship and
8 Training Act complies with applicable federal laws and
9 regulations and report back to the House and Senate Labor
10 and Industry Committees. The report will be due within 90
11 days of the effective date and it would include recommended
12 statutory changes to conform our state law to federal
13 requirements. Basically, we're asking Labor and Industry
14 to tell us what we need to do to comply with the federal
15 regulations.

16 So updated federal regulations for apprenticeship
17 programs took effect on December 29th of 2008. Since that
18 time, Pennsylvania has not conformed our state laws and
19 regulations to the federal requirements. There are some
20 areas where we do not believe that PA's laws conform to the
21 federal requirements and these are: under federal rule,
22 state apprenticeship councils are supposed to be advisory
23 bodies, but that is not the case under PA law. Federal
24 rules require reports on completion rates for
25 apprenticeship programs; state regulations are silent.

1 Federal rules provide a 90-day deadline to
2 respond to program modification requests and applicants
3 must be notified of reasons for denial. The State
4 Apprenticeship and Training Council does not have to
5 provide reasons for denial under state rules. Federal
6 rules also provide for more interstate reciprocity and more
7 flexibility for program structures.

8 So we want to work with Labor and Industry to
9 make any changes that are necessary to comply to the
10 federal regulations. It is our understanding that
11 Pennsylvania is operating under conditional approval until
12 we implement revised standards to conform to the federal
13 law. So there's really no reason that after 11 years, we
14 aren't in compliance right now, and my bill would simply
15 start that process to come into compliance.

16 So as Chairman Cox stated earlier, with our
17 struggling workforce needs, I think it's important that we
18 provide every opportunity that we can to give young people
19 apprenticeship opportunities, to grow our workforce, and to
20 keep our young people in Pennsylvania. So thank you for
21 the opportunity to be here today.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you, Representative
23 Struzzi.

24 Next, we'll hear from Representative Tobash.

25 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: Thank you, Chairman Cox

1 and Chairman Harkins.

2 This is an important issue and I appreciate the
3 fact that you're holding this hearing today, evidenced by
4 how many people we've got in the room here. Really
5 something we need to work on.

6 Just a couple of weeks ago, it was national
7 apprenticeship week and we know how important it is for
8 small businesses and the training dynamic that happens in
9 those businesses to be able to have apprenticeship programs
10 and cultivate a great workforce. So you know, happy that
11 we're here today listening to different stakeholders.

12 So businesses with apprenticeship programs, I've
13 heard complaints that the rigid requirements prevent them
14 from training workers for the open positions, and that
15 really keeps small businesses from growing in the state of
16 Pennsylvania. And economic growth is really a standard
17 that this legislative body has focused on for the last
18 number of years. And the more we can grow, the better off
19 Pennsylvania will be.

20 The Pennsylvania State Apprenticeship Program is
21 not aligned, as Representative Struzzi said, with the
22 federal standards that were issued in 2018 and the bill
23 that I've got, House Bill 2041, simply reverts to the
24 federal standard. According to the United States
25 Department of Labor website, 26 states and territories just

1 participate in the federal program, so I'm not sure why
2 we're duplicating that. Many states have moved over to the
3 federal dynamic. Why should we have L&I, another roadblock
4 in getting these apprenticeships up and running, when the
5 federal government has set the standards and we can simply
6 comply like 20 other states did along with those standards.

7 So I'm anxious to hear the stakeholders. I think
8 these three pieces of legislation are good and I think
9 they'll be effective in helping Pennsylvania's economy
10 grow. So thank you very much.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you, Representative
12 Tobash.

13 I want to thank the prime sponsors again. In
14 your opening remarks, you have raised some of the very
15 questions that have been going around in my mind since we
16 started examining this issue years ago. I had been a prime
17 sponsor of a similar bill to Representative Struzzi's. So
18 the issue is an important one.

19 I would like to ask -- Representative Gleim is
20 already seated as a member of the Committee. I would like
21 to invite Representative Tobash and Representative Struzzi,
22 if you'd be willing to relocate to a spot -- if you'd like,
23 you can join the Committee up here.

24 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: That's be great. Thank
25 you very much.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: You might want to avoid
2 this seat over here, though. It could be trouble.

3 All right. At this time, I'd like to ask our
4 panelists to come forward. We're going to hear from all
5 the stakeholders, as has been the practice with all of our
6 previous committee meetings and then our members will have
7 the opportunity to ask questions of the panel.

8 And with us today, we have Roger Brubaker,
9 Director of Construction Services with Meadow Valley
10 Electric. He's here on behalf of the Associated Builders
11 and Contractors of Pennsylvania. We also have Bruce
12 Seilhammer, National Past President of the Independent
13 Electrical Contractors. We also have Eric Ramsay, Director
14 of the Apprenticeship and Training Office with the
15 Department of Labor and Industry. We also have Rob Smith,
16 Supervisor of Instruction for Apprenticeship Programs,
17 Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters.
18 And last but not least, Frank Sirianni, President, PA
19 Building and Construction Trades Council.

20 Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone
21 to try to limit your remarks to five minutes. Our newest
22 addition to the Committee, Jonas Ricci, will signal you
23 when you have about 30 seconds remaining and again when
24 your time is up. After that, he's got people in the back
25 that will come and escort you away. He told me when we

1 came onto the Committee, he knows people. I don't know
2 what that means but...

3 And again, I'd like to thank everyone for being
4 here. I'd like to thank the audience for your interest in
5 this. And then at this point, we'll go ahead and get the
6 meeting started.

7 We'll first hear from Mr. Brubaker.

8 MR. BRUBAKER: Yes. Good morning, Chairman Cox,
9 Chairman Harkins, and members of the House Labor and
10 Industry Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to
11 present our views on Pennsylvania apprenticeship law.

12 My name is Roger Brubaker. I'm the director of
13 construction services at Meadow Valley Electric. I have
14 the honor of representing the five chapters that make up
15 the Associated Builders and Contractors of Pennsylvania.
16 I'm also a member of the State Apprenticeship Council
17 appointed by Governor Tom Wolf. The views I'm about to
18 give are on behalf of ABC PA and not those of the council.

19 There's an incredible need for skilled workers,
20 especially when 40 percent of our industry is expected to
21 retire within the ten years. The current system restricts
22 workforce development. Non-joint employers are required to
23 have four journey workers employed per apprentice after the
24 first apprentice is hired. That means an employer cannot
25 take on a second apprentice until five journey workers are

1 employed. For example, ten journey workers are needed to
2 hire three apprentices. Fifteen journey workers are needed
3 to hire four apprentices, and twenty journey workers are
4 needed to hire five apprentices. The ratio limits the
5 number of apprentices non-joint employers can hire and it
6 impacts the numbers of projects an employer can
7 competitively bid.

8 Due to the limited pool of journey-level workers
9 available, small businesses are challenged to dedicate five
10 journey workers before adding an additional apprentice.
11 The ratio also impacts the work being done by the Wolf
12 Administration and CTCs statewide through the PAsmart
13 grants that fund pre-apprenticeship. Statewide, ABC PA
14 partners with 60 CTCs and high schools on their pre-
15 apprenticeship programs. When these pre-apprentices
16 graduate, they need a place to go and be placed in.

17 Our next concern is the process itself. If a
18 non-joint program wants relief from a 4:1 ratio, they must
19 get approval from the State Apprenticeship Council. In
20 contrast, joint program ratios are defined by a collective
21 bargaining agreement granting them access to lower ratios
22 than the default ratio the law says.

23 In 2016, Mike Schurr, who chaired the council at
24 the time, stated, "If they work under a CBA, they can have
25 whatever ratio they request." The council has been

1 inflexible in approving modifications for non-joint
2 programs. In the past, safety and wages were concerns
3 raised by critics lowering the ratio for non-joint
4 programs. We surveyed 300 random joint and non-joint
5 companies' experience modification rates which are used to
6 determine worker compensation premiums. When averaging
7 this data, we found there to be absolutely no difference in
8 safety. Similar results were found when comparing OSHA
9 incident rates.

10 When it comes to wages, ABC PA's apprenticeship
11 program pays higher percentages than many other programs.
12 ABC PA's apprentices in 3-year programs start at 70 percent
13 of the journey worker wage while a 4-year apprentice starts
14 at 60 percent. Ultimately, we want to see an advancement
15 of workforce development and eliminate discrimination
16 within the ratios. We believe House Bill 1746 does both.

17 The current council and director have done a
18 great job growing apprenticeship in the state, but the law
19 still discriminates against non-joint programs in regard to
20 the ratios. House Bill 1746 fixes this.

21 We strongly support the provision that allows
22 non-joint programs access to the same ratios that joint
23 programs have. This would allow both joint and non-joint
24 programs to be on equal footing while allowing the council
25 to continue to operate.

1 An alternative to end discrimination against non-
2 joint programs would be House Bill 2041 which would turn
3 the program over to the federal government. In our view,
4 the federal Office of Apprenticeship has shown to be a
5 bipartisan entity that makes decisions for the benefit of
6 workforce development and the apprentice, regardless of
7 political party.

8 House Bill 1840 address change Pennsylvania needs
9 to make pursuant to new federal rules which were finalized
10 in 2008. The state submitted revised regulations to the
11 U.S. Department of Labor which were approved in 2013.
12 House Bill 1840 requires the department to share the
13 revised regulations with the committee. ABC believes the
14 report should not be the only action taken on this issue.

15 We're proud to be a part of this effort that
16 makes Pennsylvania a national recognized leader in
17 apprenticeship programs, but the ratios work against non-
18 joint programs.

19 Mr. Chairman, the next steps must be taken. As
20 stakeholders, we come together, ABC PA, and we stand ready
21 to engage in a conversation to move the ball forward.

22 I look forward to hearing from the panel, learn
23 how we can get together to encourage workforce development
24 and end ratio discrimination against non-joint programs.
25 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you, Mr. Brubaker.

2 Next, we'll hear from Bruce Seilhammer.

3 MR. SEILHAMMER: Chairman Cox, Chairman Harkins,
4 and members of the House Labor and Industry Committee,
5 thank you for the opportunity to share our views on the
6 apprenticeship ratio concerns.

7 My name is Bruce Seilhammer. I'm the Electrical
8 Construction Group Manager at SECCO, Incorporated in Camp
9 Hill. I started my career in the electrical industry over
10 36 years ago in the United States Air Force. I'm here
11 today representing the three regional chapters of the
12 Independent Electrical Contractors of Pennsylvania. We're
13 part of a national association of 51 chapters and over
14 3,000 contractor members. I've been involved locally,
15 having served in each of the positions on the board as well
16 as on the national executive board serving as the national
17 president in 2017.

18 I've seen firsthand the needs of manpower for
19 contractors not only in Pennsylvania but across the
20 country. The demands for manpower in the construction
21 industry are growing exponentially and we are not keeping
22 up by any stretch.

23 My colleague, Roger, just spoke about the
24 statistic that 40 percent of our industry workforce is
25 expected to retire in the next ten years. Well, that

1 would, in fact, include the two of us and even more that
2 are in this room today. There will be a lot of
3 institutional knowledge that will leave with that 40
4 percent.

5 It's really up to us to do what we can to fill
6 the pipeline with new young talent. The governor and the
7 legislators have been put to task to promote and grow our
8 apprenticeship programs. We, as contractors, have
9 continued to do our part by sharing messages at high
10 schools, participating in job fairs, and working with the
11 local CTCs. We've even been able to insert our apprentice
12 program into the senior year of some of the local high
13 schools to give those motivated students a head start for
14 after they graduate.

15 The issues become when they graduate. We, the
16 State of Pennsylvania, continue to be the bottleneck that
17 chokes the potential for growth due to our journeymen-to-
18 apprentice ratio. The schools are doing a good job raising
19 awareness for the students that want to pursue a career in
20 the trades and the contractors are doing their best to take
21 on new talent. It all comes back to the same issue: until
22 Pennsylvania changes its stance on the ratios, we'll
23 continue to stifle companies from growing and we'll lose
24 apprentices to our neighboring states.

25 Currently, our neighboring states look like this

1 regarding ratios: Ohio and New York are 3:1; West
2 Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey are 1:1.
3 Three of the states with the 1:1 ratio are 30 to 45 minutes
4 away from many in the south-central region. If we're not
5 putting them to work, you can bet our neighbors will be
6 glad to. They have the same manpower needs that we do. It
7 would be prudent to keep our fellow Pennsylvanians
8 contributing to the tax base here as opposed to the other
9 states.

10 I applaud and appreciate the freshman members for
11 being a part of this today knowing this may be the first
12 time you're hearing these concerns. For those of us who
13 have been around the block a few times, we need to get
14 something done. I would challenge you all today to not
15 just listen to the testimony but to show us what can be
16 done to get people to work that truly want to.

17 Representative Gleim's bill is a great start to
18 help get us in a better position to enhance our workforce
19 here in PA. We are lucky enough, currently, to be part of
20 a vibrant and growing economy and we have an opportunity to
21 put even more people to work if some of the restraints are
22 lifted to allow us to do it.

23 Thank you again for the opportunity to share
24 this.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you.

1 Next, we'll hear from Eric Ramsay.

2 MR. RAMSAY: Good morning. Many thanks to
3 Chairman Cox and Harkins and the Labor and Industry
4 Committee for the opportunity to speak today.

5 My name's Eric Ramsay and I'm the director of the
6 Apprenticeship and Training Office. I've been working on
7 issues of apprenticeship and training since I first joined
8 the Bureau of Labor Law Compliance at Labor and Industry in
9 1999. While there, I served as the program manager for the
10 apprenticeship and training which included the duties of
11 reviewing apprenticeship compliance issues, maintaining
12 records of registered apprenticeship programs, and serving
13 as the administrative arm for the Apprenticeship and
14 Training Council.

15 With the creation of the Apprenticeship and
16 Training Office, I continue to perform those same duties
17 with the added mission of increasing the number of
18 apprenticeship program opportunities, educating the public
19 about the benefits of apprenticeship, and expanding the
20 apprenticeship model into nontraditional occupations,
21 industries, and populations.

22 My goal today is to outline the process,
23 guidelines, and requirements for registering apprenticeship
24 programs in Pennsylvania which includes regulations on
25 journey-worker-to-apprentice ratios.

1 The Apprenticeship and Training Council is
2 charged with approving registered apprenticeship programs
3 in Pennsylvania. The council is made up of 11 members with
4 representatives of employees, employers, and the general
5 public. The Apprenticeship and Training Office provides
6 support for the council which makes the final determination
7 of approval on programs. Since 2010, the U.S. Department
8 of Labor's Employment and Training Administration has
9 granted Pennsylvania continued recognition as a
10 registration agency for federal apprenticeship purposes.
11 This allows the ATO to build relationships with PA
12 employers, customize state-specific programs for our
13 stakeholders, and provide agile customer service that can
14 quickly respond to the needs of employers and workers
15 within the state.

16 When an employer wants to register an
17 apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship, the organization is
18 provided with an application and Pennsylvania standards of
19 apprenticeship. These standards include the number of
20 hours required in on-the-job training, the amount of hours
21 required in classroom instruction, the journey-worker-to-
22 apprentice ratio, and a variety of other standards. The
23 application requires the employer to provide workforce
24 demographics, selection procedures, apprentice agreement,
25 an outline of related instruction or classroom training,

1 and a letter from the training provider.

2 My staff and I work with the employer to assist
3 with the application and prepare them for the
4 Apprenticeship and Training Council meeting. The employer
5 then appears before the council to briefly describe the
6 program and answer any questions the council may have.

7 Most programs are approved during the process. A
8 small number are tabled if there are any outstanding issues
9 that need to be resolved. We work very hard to make sure
10 that any organization that wants to sponsor an
11 apprenticeship program in Pennsylvania is able to meet the
12 requirements and ultimately, get a program approved.

13 Health, safety, and welfare of the apprentice are
14 values that are embedded into the core of registered
15 apprenticeship. Proper supervision and training for
16 apprentices are two major factors that need to be addressed
17 in every registered apprenticeship program.

18 In the regulations governing apprenticeship and
19 training programs, ratios are addressed in Section 83.5
20 subsection 7. It stipulates: 1 apprentice for 4 journey
21 workers, 2 apprentices for 9 journey workers, 3 apprentices
22 for 14 journey workers, and so forth in units of 5 journey
23 workers. These ratios secure safety at the website and
24 ensure the journey worker can properly supervise and train
25 the apprentice. The Apprenticeship and Training Council

1 verifies the ratio requirements at the time of approval,
2 but otherwise, not kept historical data on ratios once the
3 programs have been approved.

4 Since the creation of the Apprenticeship and
5 Training Office in 2016, apprentice numbers have grown 38
6 percent from 13,282 to 18,366 Pennsylvanians that are
7 getting on-the-job training in a variety of occupations.
8 Pennsylvania's goal is to grow the number of apprentices to
9 30,000 by the year 2025. Pennsylvania is currently sixth
10 in the U.S. for the number of registered apprentices and
11 tenth in the U.S. for the apprentices completing
12 apprenticeship programs.

13 During this administration, we have registered
14 numerous non-traditional apprenticeship programs in
15 healthcare, human services, early childhood education,
16 information technology, medical research, and agriculture.
17 Several of these programs are especially innovative and are
18 the first of their kind in the nation.

19 The Apprenticeship and Training Office has
20 received apprenticeship accelerator and expanse grants to
21 ramp up and expand registered apprenticeship activities in
22 Pennsylvania. Labor and Industry has received over 5.7
23 million in grants with allowable activities such as tuition
24 reimbursement, training materials, supplies, and overall
25 delivery of the training of apprentices. In addition, the

1 governor's PAsmart initiative has provided \$14 million for
2 apprenticeship funds to date which has allowed us to fund
3 new apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and to
4 increase apprenticeship for non-traditional populations and
5 non-traditional industries.

6 Again, thank you, Chairman Cox and Chairman
7 Harkins and the rest of the Labor and Industry Committee.
8 I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you.

10 Next, we'll hear from Rob Smith.

11 MR. SMITH: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Chairman
12 Cox, Chairman Harkins, respected committee members. On
13 behalf of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of
14 Carpenters, I would like to extend our appreciation and
15 thank you for your ongoing courtesies and allowing us to
16 provide input on the issues that come before this
17 committee.

18 My name is Rob Smith. I'm Supervisor of
19 Construction for the Carpenters Union Joint Apprentice
20 Training Programs. Our geographic jurisdiction not only is
21 the Commonwealth of PA -- my home state -- but also New
22 Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia,
23 West Virginia, and 13 counties in North Carolina.

24 In Pennsylvania alone, we approximately have
25 3,000 apprentices enrolled in registered apprenticeship

1 programs in trades of carpentry, cabinet making, floor
2 laying, millwright, and pile driving. These students are
3 allowed to attend one of our five facilities located in
4 Philadelphia, Allentown, Pittsburgh, Lebanon Valley, and
5 Duncansville.

6 Nationally, there are 62,000 registered
7 apprentices affiliated with the United Brotherhood of
8 Carpenters Training Programs. For over 60-plus years,
9 apprentice training and career development is something
10 that the UBC takes very seriously as an organization and I
11 am humbled to be before this committee to express our views
12 on this pending legislation.

13 Mr. Chairman, we believe that the registered
14 apprenticeship model is the best form of job readiness
15 training that exists today. Our apprentices are in family-
16 sustaining wages, excellent medical coverage, and
17 retirement benefits all while they learn and hone their
18 trade practices. Those who successfully complete our
19 programs do so with industry-standard credentials,
20 transferrable skills, articulating college credits, and
21 employment and future career growth opportunities with one
22 of our many contractor partners.

23 I sit here before this committee as a successful
24 completer of an apprenticeship program in Philadelphia,
25 class of 1997, complete with credentials, education, and

1 free on-the-job training provided by journey persons who
2 have mastered their craft over the years. And this
3 training didn't cost me or the PA taxpayers one dime. This
4 allowed my wife and I the ability to provide a stable home
5 for our family of four and work to create a bright future
6 for our children.

7 We have been requested to testify here regarding
8 three bills: House Bill 1746, House Bill 1840, and House
9 Bill 2041 that have been introduced to this chamber that
10 relate directly to apprenticeships.

11 House Bill 1746. This bill attempts to
12 restructure the journeymen-apprentice ratios basing this on
13 size of business and perceived level of danger to the
14 apprentice. Mr. Chairman, the entire premise of
15 apprenticeships in construction came from workplace safety.
16 The ability to work to provide for your family and go home
17 every night is what everybody wants. Construction is a
18 very hazardous occupation and at any time, you could be
19 required to work on a temporary scaffold in a refinery or
20 power plant or in a confined space. Or work at heights
21 installing protective guardrail for workers, 23 stories
22 above the ground, even. Even installing a piece of
23 intricate millwork that requires training on how to operate
24 pneumatic nailers or saws properly.

25 Working as an apprentice 26 years ago, I relied

1 on these master journey people that I worked alongside of
2 to look out for my safety as a young carpenter. I also
3 learned many proper trade practices, some that were right
4 and some that were wrong, but all those people who I worked
5 with helped me through my apprenticeship to gain the
6 skills, knowledge, and confidence to be a successful
7 component to a contractor's project profitability.

8 To reduce the ratio of journeymen based on a
9 perceived safety hazard is a reckless proposition and one
10 that affects every person in Pennsylvania who aspires to
11 have a long, safe, sustainable career in construction. The
12 danger on a project is not mitigated by the size of one's
13 employer or subjected view of that hazard. Diminishing the
14 level of trained experienced workers on the projects will
15 only increase potential for accidents as well as increase
16 liability insurance costs for contractors in Pennsylvania.
17 It will also reduce the number of qualified persons that
18 support the on-the-job training portion of the registered
19 apprenticeship model which is the successful model. You
20 have to have 1,800 hours of, you know -- or 2,000 hours of
21 training. Accordingly, we oppose House Bill 1746.

22 House Bill 2041. This house bill calls for an
23 abolishment of our Pennsylvania State Apprentice Council
24 which is comprised of Labor and Industry leaders from
25 across this commonwealth who have experience on how this

1 state works so well together and thrives better than
2 anybody in Washington, any bureaucrat could ever do.

3 Arguments can be made for a SAC state or a BAT
4 state; however, I happen to represent programs in New
5 Jersey and in West Virginia which are BAT programs, and
6 Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia which are
7 all SAC state programs. I can tell you from my experience
8 with these programs that under the state jurisdiction
9 function more effectively and efficiently than the federal
10 programs. I attribute to the connection between the
11 apprentice programs and the other state workforce
12 development initiatives as well as the clear lines of
13 accountability that exist at the state level. The fact
14 that I'm sitting here discussing with you today is a
15 testament to that accountability.

16 The other states in my jurisdiction and function
17 are as federal BAT states have experienced conflicts due to
18 multi-state responsibilities and attention to ensure that
19 our apprentice programs remain second to none to sometimes
20 lacking. Accordingly, we oppose 2041.

21 And in the essence of time, House Bill 1840. If
22 the goal of House Bill 1840 is to identify specific
23 legislative changes needed to convert Pennsylvania to a
24 federal BAT state, we would also oppose that legislation as
25 well. We prefer the SAC model.

1 Thank you for my opportunity to testify.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: All right. Thank you.

3 And next, we'll hear from Frank Sirianni.

4 MR. SIRIANNI: Good morning.

5 Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Cox and
6 Chairman -- I think it's on. Is it on? I'll get Eddie
7 Pashinski in here to test it for me and sing a little song.

8 Good morning, Chairman Cox and Chairman Harkins.
9 My name is Frank Sirianni. Thank you. And I'm the
10 president of the Pennsylvania State Building Trades
11 Council. Thank you and the committee for allowing me to be
12 here today.

13 I'm with the Pennsylvania State Building Trades
14 Council and currently, we have 94 construction unions,
15 affiliates, and 16 regional councils. Collectively, we
16 represent about 133,000 construction workers across the
17 State of Pennsylvania.

18 We have been in the apprenticeship business for
19 over 100 years and it's been a long haul and it seems today
20 that that's the buzz word, apprenticeship programs.
21 Everybody wants to have an apprenticeship program. We're
22 really working hard with our 3,000 signatory contractors in
23 Pennsylvania to maintain the standards of quality
24 construction for the end user, for the taxpayer, and for
25 all the people that have construction projects to make sure

1 that they get the best trained and the finest quality
2 project at the end of the day.

3 I'm a glazier by trade and I don't know if you
4 know what a glazier is. We do not frost donuts. We put
5 glass in. If you look out here in the atrium, that glass
6 up there, one of our companies put that glass in years ago.
7 It's pretty dangerous. I've been up 33 stories on a swing
8 outside of a building which is two cables that are tied
9 into something on top of the roof that you have to be
10 trained on how to adhere that to the structure to make sure
11 that you don't fall and get killed.

12 I can't see a 1:1 ratio with an apprentice and a
13 glazier going up in that kind of situation. It's just not
14 feasible. Even on scaffolding. I've seen reports of
15 people who have walked off the end of a scaffolding just
16 because they're so busy working and, you know, you have to
17 be aware of what's happening in the industry around you.

18 I don't want to go too far into the safety issue,
19 but I can tell you, I've seen people injured -- union, non-
20 union -- across the board. It drives up costs for
21 construction projects. It drives up cost for workers' comp
22 for employers which, again, gets passed down to the end
23 user.

24 I think whenever you try to change something
25 that's been successful through the years, I think you need

1 to really step back and take a deep, deep drill into the
2 subject that you're looking at. There are some things that
3 could be done to improve standards for workers in
4 Pennsylvania.

5 I'm a participant on the Workforce Development
6 Board. I'm one of the board members for the state board,
7 and like I said, the buzz word is apprenticeship program.
8 Everybody wants to have apprentices, okay, and that's okay.
9 I just think the construction industry is a lot different
10 from a warehouse worker or someone who's working in a
11 bakery.

12 Ratios at a bakery, 1:1; that might make sense.
13 On a construction site, it doesn't. If you get over here
14 to the Keystone Building, there were 300 workers on that
15 building. I cannot imagine 150 of those people being
16 apprentices. I mean, just in the cost figure alone for
17 someone having to go and make sure that person does the
18 project correctly, it takes time away. When you put them
19 in a group of people, they have more coordination with the
20 person, more oversight. It's just not feasible in a
21 construction industry.

22 Working in construction as long as I have and now
23 I wear a suit, but I am a construction worker so. Out of
24 all the programs in Pennsylvania -- you heard the number.
25 There was over 13,000 construction workers in Pennsylvania.

1 We train over 85 percent of all construction workers in all
2 aspects of employment in Pennsylvania.

3 As far as the aging workforce, we've addressed
4 that in our industries with our contractors and we've been
5 moving forward.

6 I've been to several of the council meetings that
7 the state has when people are applying for different ratios
8 and things like that. And one of the key questions that's
9 asked at those council meetings, how many employees do you
10 have? And you'll hear a remark, and I'm not going to name
11 the particular contractor, but the day I was in there I was
12 kind of surprised the contractor says, well, we have 25
13 employees and we want more apprentices. Are all your
14 employees working right now? No; ten of them are laid off.
15 Okay. So we're laying off ten people but we want to bring
16 in four or five more apprentices at a lower rate. And I
17 think that, you know, we have to justify how we're doing
18 this. You know, we don't want to see people collecting
19 unemployment and ending up out of the industry, but -- is
20 that my timer?

21 MR. RICCI: Thirty seconds.

22 MR. SIRIANNI: Okay. I can't talk that fast.

23 But what I really think you need to do is drill
24 deep into this workforce investment money that's going out
25 and find out what kind of results are coming out of the

1 people that are getting grants and how many people are
2 actually going into the crafts that they applied for their
3 apprenticeship programs. I think that would be a good
4 first start for this committee to look into those things
5 and find out that the taxpayer's money that's going to
6 provide these apprenticeship programs for people, how their
7 success rate is. Each person should be tracked by their
8 success, and I think that would help as a start to moving
9 in the right direction in apprenticeship programs in
10 Pennsylvania.

11 Any questions I'd be happy to answer.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: All right. I'd like to
13 thank all of you for your testimony.

14 We have a few individuals. I'd ask members
15 communicate with my executive director by eye contact,
16 secret handshake, signal, whatever you need to do to let
17 him know you'd like to ask a question.

18 I would like to start and kind of address a
19 little bit of a comment you made there at the end regarding
20 the -- I'm assuming you're taking about the PAsmart grants
21 and other types of things?

22 MR. SIRIANNI: Grants in general. Grants in
23 general.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Okay. There are a lot of
25 apprentice programs out there that are not funded by

1 taxpayer dollars, so I don't think we have to limit that.
2 And that's one of the reasons for the discussion today. We
3 want to figure out how we can open up the gates. I think
4 we do things best, many times, when the government's not
5 involved, when the government's not the one paying the bill
6 for it because when you have that private investment, it
7 puts the ownership on the people who are running the
8 program to say, we've got to make this work. If they're
9 getting money, they may or may not care about the results.
10 Ideally, they do, but when you've got that personal
11 investment, you tend to pay more attention to the outcomes
12 of it. And so I think that's the goal of the bills that we
13 have before us.

14 One of the concerns I have about things like the
15 PAsmart program, and I'm not going to say that it's not
16 doing some good things. I've never been a fan of the
17 Keystone Opportunity Zones. I've never been a fan of these
18 isolated, targeted fixes that put money toward, you know,
19 one little section or another and allows somebody,
20 typically a governor or his cabinet, to determine where
21 that money goes. I'd rather turn the entire state into a
22 Keystone Opportunity Zone.

23 And I think expanding and focusing on how we can
24 improve and open up the doors for apprenticeships, I think
25 that is that type of a move. I think it opens up the

1 entire state rather than, you know, fine tuning the edges
2 of an existing program, these bills propose to take a step
3 in another direction and it's an opportunity for us to --
4 if we have to blow the doors off something and start in a
5 different direction, I think that's something that we
6 should take a look at. So that's kind of my 30,000-foot
7 view for what it's worth.

8 I'm going to start with the various members who
9 have questions and we're going to go ahead and start with
10 Representative Nelson.

11 REPRESENTATIVE NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
12 It's a crazy microphone situation.

13 And thank you all for your testimony.

14 I think part of the goal today that we want to be
15 able to do is improve the workplace situation to be able
16 to, you know, open up the funnel, so to speak, for a lot of
17 our younger people that are in training programs or at
18 those CTC programs now. Particularly for me, I really hear
19 it a lot in manufacturing and machinists. The shortage,
20 the desire to -- multiple employers to expand the number of
21 machinists that they have, and they're limited because of
22 our current government situation that is not allowing them
23 to be able to grow.

24 My question is directed more towards Mr. Ramsay.
25 On the growth that Pennsylvania has been having, the way

1 that the ratios work out, larger companies, it's easier for
2 them to be able to grow and take on contracts. You know,
3 under the Gleim Bill, one of the things that I like is the
4 -- there are, you know, fatality tiers, so it would be a
5 3:1, let's say, for construction. Manufacturing is a 1:1.

6 When you see the growth that Pennsylvania is
7 having, how, you know -- how does small business factor in?
8 Because I'm hearing that they're very, very stifled. They
9 can't grow to meet their contracts because of these ratios.

10 MR. RAMSAY: What I would say to that is when we
11 developed the office, there was a thought of the small
12 employers, the mid-size employers --

13 Is it on? Pull a little closer. Can you hear
14 me?

15 There was that thought put into how do we help
16 small employers or mid-size employers. What we came up
17 with is called group-sponsored apprenticeship where there
18 is an association, whether it's a chamber of commerce,
19 whether it's a training provider, whoever, that can sponsor
20 or administer an apprenticeship program, register their
21 standards, and then tie small to mid-size employers to them
22 to help with that administrative piece.

23 Most small to mid-size employers, they may not
24 have an HR program. It may be the owner kind of running
25 everything him or herself. So the administrative or this

1 group sponsorship allows to take that burden off of the
2 small to mid-size employer. So that's what we've been
3 doing. That's how we've been experiencing growth in
4 apprenticeship in terms of not only just the actual
5 apprentices but the actual program as well, group
6 sponsorship.

7 Right now, we have about 820 programs that are
8 registered in Pennsylvania, meaning that they can deliver
9 apprenticeship programing or training, but there's a lot
10 more employers that are involved. Actually, employers are
11 really key to apprenticeship.

12 REPRESENTATIVE NELSON: So it's a great program,
13 the assistance from the administrative side, you know, so
14 these small employers can get assistance with the paperwork
15 and then touring the CTCs. You know, they're doing a
16 really strong job. The bottleneck seems to happen if I
17 have ten machinists and I want to hire four machinists to
18 be able to take on a contract, I can't do that right now
19 even if all ten of those machinists are journeymen because
20 of that worker ratio; is that correct?

21 MR. RAMSAY: Well, I mean, just because you have
22 an apprenticeship program doesn't mean you can't hire
23 people, right. So apprenticeship, you have to be -- to be
24 an apprentice, you have to be employed with a company, but
25 you can be an employee of the company and not be an

1 apprentice. So you can have someone that you need to -- if
2 you have a workforce need, you can always hire someone to
3 do the work.

4 There are the ratios that are associated with the
5 actual apprenticeship program, but yeah, so it's not
6 necessarily a bottleneck in terms of workers that you can
7 hire; it's the amount of apprentices that you can register.

8 REPRESENTATIVE NELSON: Okay, thank you.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: And to make sure
10 everybody's paying close attention, we're going to move to
11 Representative Neilson at this time.

12 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: I'll try and keep it
13 short, and we know that's not going to happen today,
14 Chairman. Thank you for your indulgence.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Jonas, set the timer.

16 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Bruce, I'm an
17 electrician by trade as well, and I started 37 years ago in
18 a registered apprenticeship program, 1982. I started on my
19 19th birthday. And I remember that first day as I was at a
20 water treatment plant and the first thing that journeyman
21 sent me for was a bucket of electrons. And I looked for
22 that bucket for two hours; thus, the need for training. So
23 thank you for your testimony today, Bruce.

24 Your particular contractor, how many of you
25 graduated through an approved apprenticeship program over

1 the last ten years?

2 MR. SEILHAMMER: That's a good question. The
3 group that we have working for us currently, probably about
4 60 percent of them. Some of the folks came there that were
5 already experienced, you know, as we hired them over the
6 years.

7 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Because being an
8 electrician, you know first-hand how important training is.
9 I mean, on-the-job training is typically 80 to 90 percent
10 of apprentice training, okay, and then without the proper
11 training ratio, the negative effects hits the consumer
12 itself because without training -- as I just said, I wasn't
13 trained. I was trained on that first day on the job. I
14 had no clue what I was doing; none. And they wanted to
15 make certain that I knew what I was doing as we moved
16 forward because the people are at risk. I mean,
17 construction workers typically go into places that are
18 unfit for humans to be in and we have to make sure
19 everything's there, properly installed or the public safety
20 is at risk as well. I mean, do you believe that?

21 MR. SEILHAMMER: Yes, sir.

22 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Because I just don't
23 understand. The purpose of this is to create a safe,
24 productive, highly-skilled workforce and that's what I
25 don't understand today's discussions because we just heard

1 from Eric that says, you know, there's no balk about hiring
2 people. We can always hire people to deliver that material
3 to the job and do this and that. Because that's kind of
4 like a pre-apprenticeship, you know. At least let the kid
5 learn what a 1900 box is because you and I are the only
6 ones in this room that know what we're talking about,
7 right?

8 MR. SEILHAMMER: Right.

9 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Just you and me.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SNYDER: I'm married to an
11 electrician.

12 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: You married one. That
13 doesn't mean you picked up his bag.

14 But 40 states have apprenticeship councils, or
15 somewhere in that, to look at this, to oversee it, and
16 there's a need for joint programs.

17 Eric, we heard testimony today and just -- I'm
18 going to let you run through it, Eric, okay, because I
19 remember my first day at Labor and Industry. I met you and
20 your father both and we worked on this stuff before. We
21 heard testimony today that the department discriminates
22 against workers or employers. Do you believe that's a true
23 statement?

24 MR. RAMSAY: No.

25 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: That was part of today's

1 testimony.

2 MR. RAMSAY: No. That's not a true statement.

3 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Says you discriminate.

4 MR. RAMSAY: No, no.

5 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: All right.

6 Do you think the abolishment of the council would
7 be good or bad for the future youth of the Commonwealth?

8 MR. RAMSAY: I believe that the council -- well,
9 just to answer quickly, I think that would be a bad idea.
10 And I think it would be -- if I can elaborate just a
11 little.

12 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: We've also heard that
13 you're not in compliance with federal law, your department,
14 and I was there for -- I spent quite a few years in the
15 department. Do you believe that you're in compliance with
16 federal law?

17 MR. RAMSAY: I believe that we are in compliance
18 with federal law. The federal government representative,
19 Ron Leonard, the multi-state navigator, his oversight is
20 over Pennsylvania, Maryland, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia.
21 I don't think I'm leaving anybody out. I don't know if I
22 said Maryland. But he regularly attends our council
23 meetings, gives a report during those council meetings,
24 relays kind of this, you know -- what's going on at the
25 federal level. He takes our information back.

1 Pennsylvania is looked upon very favorably by the U.S. DOL
2 for the activities that we've been doing to grow
3 apprenticeship.

4 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Thank you.

5 Mr. Brubaker, you're representing the ABC today
6 and you talked about how many apprentices you have. What
7 is your graduation rate for the ABC?

8 MR. BRUBAKER: The graduation rate?

9 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Uh-huh.

10 MR. BRUBAKER: About 58 percent.

11 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: 58 percent. Thank you,
12 sir.

13 Mr. Sirianni, what is the graduation rate of the
14 Pennsylvania Building Trades Council?

15 MR. SIRIANNI: Currently it's about 70 percent.
16 It depends on the industry in general. We have a lot of
17 people that come in and decide, well, maybe you don't like
18 construction. It's not real flashy. I mean, and being on
19 the Workforce Development Board, we're really reaching out
20 to try to get kids in grade school to be aware of the
21 construction industry because students are typically told
22 they got to go to college. And so a lot of the funding
23 that's going to the schools to have teachers go to
24 different apprenticeship programs to find out what they're
25 about.

1 Our ratios of graduation are usually -- tend to
2 be 70 to 75 percent across the board in crafts. We have
3 some companies that have 100 percent. Then again, we have
4 some that, you know, people come out and they say, I don't
5 want to do this. It's not an easy job, you know, and it's
6 dangerous.

7 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Thank you.

8 So Mr. Chairman, look at that. I'm running real
9 close, all right.

10 I just want to -- like this is -- I've been
11 coming to Harrisburg since 1992 -- in regards to
12 apprenticeship rates, the ratio, because I've known the
13 importance and it's never been a partisan issue. So I look
14 forward to keep on moving forward in a bipartisan manner.
15 There hasn't been a governor since I've started coming up
16 on this that disagreed with the program that we have today
17 and I don't think we have one this time. And from the
18 looks of the political field coming up, it doesn't look
19 like we'll have one next time, either. Apprenticeship
20 ratios are a big deal and we have to make sure we do any
21 changes very, very carefully and slowly.

22 Thank you, Chairman.

23 Thank you, everybody.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Representative Neilson, I
25 don't think anyone is arguing that there shouldn't be any

1 ratios. I think we're trying to figure out what that
2 proper balance is.

3 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Well, that's what
4 surprised me about eliminating the council in all. That's
5 part of the legislation we're talking about today. I mean,
6 that --

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: And we're discussing all
8 the issues and, you know, do we do that? Do we do
9 something in between? I think that's part of the
10 discussion that needs to happen.

11 So with that said, I'd like to call on our next
12 member for questions. Representative Dush.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Thank you, Chair, and I'm
14 in agreement with the Chairman on this. And quite
15 honestly, I'm also in agreement with him on the fact that
16 the trade union facilities do a very excellent job of
17 training and educating. They're filling in the gaps a lot
18 of times for the kids coming out of the schools that
19 haven't had the proper education in the first place. And I
20 honestly believe I think that's why -- because you've got
21 the training facilities, that's why you've got that 70
22 percent versus a 58 or 60 percent with the private because
23 you've got that dedicated classroom facility.

24 Rob, you had mentioned something and you used a
25 word that I want to try and distinguish. You used the term

1 reckless when it came to at least one of these pieces of
2 legislation, and yet you're working in New Jersey,
3 Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Maryland. Those states
4 that are going the way that that particular piece of
5 legislation is intending to go. Are you classifying those
6 as reckless?

7 MR. SMITH: I've just been pretty much put in
8 that position over the last year, you know -- was promoted
9 to that position over the last year. My experience on the
10 job site with having four journeymen to one, you have 25
11 percent of each individual is looking out for that person's
12 safety and health and welfare and training as well because
13 the states puts so much into OJT and that on-the-job
14 training portion, you have to have qualified individuals
15 there. Do I agree with the other states as a 1:1? Not
16 necessarily, in my opinion. No, I don't.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Would you classify them as
18 reckless, though?

19 MR. SMITH: Well, we have higher ratios for our
20 contracts than the 1:1. I do know that. So we try to
21 adhere to a higher -- they can set the ratio what they
22 want, but we go higher because we see the need.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Okay. And just a final
24 comment. You know, we're the 5th most populated state and
25 right now, we're ranked 6th as you had said on the number

1 of apprentices enrolled, and tenth on completion. And I'm
2 kind of wondering if part of that is because of the
3 bottleneck that ABC and others are talking about with these
4 apprentice ratios. Is it actually impeding, especially
5 when you're looking at places like machinists and that sort
6 of thing?

7 MR. SIRIANNI: Some of that, you have to look
8 back over the economy. Are you asking --

9 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: You can answer too, Eric.

10 MR. SIRIANNI: Sorry. I didn't know who you were
11 asking. But from what I've observed, you look at the
12 economy. When the economy took a dive in 2008, '09, '10,
13 construction industry wasn't doing much of anything, so you
14 know, we adjust for that. And the apprenticeship numbers
15 were down then, so you know, people that were in the
16 industry went to different jobs. I mean, people left the
17 state. It's coming back now.

18 My concern is long-term. We're looking at people
19 who are going to sit in these seats, 20 years from now.
20 The growth of construction in Pennsylvania this past year
21 was two percent, and you would think that it was a lot
22 higher than that but if it wasn't for the gas industry and
23 things that are happening out in the West and in the
24 Northeast and different places like that, there's
25 unemployment in Pennsylvania in the construction industry

1 and it varies throughout the state.

2 So you don't want to flood a market where you
3 have all these people coming into a market that you won't
4 have jobs for.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Right.

6 MR. SIRIANNI: So you have to be very cautious on
7 how you do these things. Sure, there's going to be pockets
8 of where you can't find enough people to do a particular
9 job. We have one local in Pittsburgh that went from 4,000
10 members to 7,000 members in the past two years. And we're
11 taking in people all the time. We go to all the schools.
12 We go to all the counselors, whatever we can do. We're
13 affiliated with colleges to make sure the people who
14 graduate from our programs have associate degrees. We have
15 one program that's actually an accredited college now and
16 we have another one that's working on that.

17 We're moving forward to improve the industry, not
18 just find cheap labor.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: My comment though was based
20 on the lag that Pennsylvania's experienced. Every other
21 state has gone through the same typical cycle of the
22 economy and I'm grateful for what we're doing as an economy
23 now. And I see the opportunities out there, but something
24 is definitely affecting the apprentice ratios.

25 MR. RAMSAY: I would say to kind of go off of

1 Frank's comments in terms of the economy, we were at a
2 lower point and we are starting to rebound. But I think
3 that part of the, you know -- to getting us back to that
4 level was the development of the Apprenticeship and
5 Training Office in 2016. Before that, historically, the
6 U.S. DOL had a presence of about 12, what we call, field
7 representatives in Pennsylvania and I think that was in the
8 early '90s. But as time went on and moved closer to 2016,
9 their presence became zero and they came to us and said,
10 hey, Pennsylvania, you have an act and regulations. You
11 need to step up and take some more onus in terms of
12 developing the apprenticeship programs. We know you're
13 doing the compliance piece, but now it's time to build the
14 programs.

15 So in 2016, I took that position, and one of the
16 main things that we've decided that we wanted to do was to
17 get into the non-traditional areas of apprenticeship and
18 expand the model into more diverse occupations and
19 participants involved in apprenticeship programs. So we
20 think that we're rebounding and we're definitely trending
21 in the right direction in apprenticeship.

22 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Roger, did you have
23 anything? Did you have anything on that, about the
24 difference in the bottleneck? Is that --

25 MR. BRUBAKER: Well, a couple of things. First

1 of all, I would challenge anyone sitting here at the table
2 to come up with a term that explains the discrimination
3 against ratio that we, as non-joint contractors, feel and
4 have been feeling ever since it's been like that from day
5 one. You know, 87 percent of the construction workforce in
6 Pennsylvania is tired of feeling like second-class citizens
7 and being discriminated against on this ratio issue. It is
8 a problem and it's got to change.

9 I owned a company for over 40 years and I was
10 restricted. We had people in the wings waiting, CTC
11 students. I testified at a senate hearing two years ago
12 with my CTC student who I couldn't register because I
13 didn't have enough journeymen in my company. That student
14 had committed to the trade and couldn't become registered
15 because of that.

16 I would also challenge anyone that's claiming
17 that there's a safety issue with ratios. I'd like to see
18 the statistics on that safety. We have heard a lot of
19 complaints about safety for many, many years. I've yet to
20 see a safety study that shows that ratio impacts safety.
21 In fact, the safety information that we have gathered at
22 ABC, some of that information actually shows the contrary
23 that the lower ratios actually have a better incident
24 rating than the higher ratio states. So that's what I'd
25 have to say about that.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you. And I'm going
2 to use what I'll call the Chairman's prerogative and ask a
3 question.

4 One of the things that I'm hearing is that we're
5 looking for parity; we're looking for a fairness of, you
6 know, to use an old adage, what's good for the goose is
7 good for the gander. In this case, you're saying it
8 shouldn't be. My question is, why are union ratios not
9 good enough for non-union shops? How are unions having a
10 ratio and somehow that's safe and then you put it over into
11 a non-union shop and suddenly, those same ratios are not
12 safe? How do you justify that in light of the safety
13 records telling us just the opposite story?

14 The MOD rates; I've taken a look at those on the
15 local level. Representative Mackenzie and I visited with a
16 local gentleman who had gone down through the MOD rates for
17 examining this type of thing saying where's the safety
18 problem? Where is the safety issue in the non-union
19 sector? Why are we continuing down this road that we
20 started down in 1960? Why are we still there? Why are we
21 not, at least, leveling the playing field? So that is my
22 question. Anyone wants to put input on that, I'd love to
23 hear it.

24 MR. SIRIANNI: If I may try to address all your
25 concerns. First of all, the apprenticeship programs in

1 Pennsylvania, which, as I said, many of ours started over
2 100 years ago, they have to have standards to be validated
3 and accepted by the federal government and by the state.
4 You have to develop standards which you have to have so
5 much minority participation or outreach to minority and
6 women and military, things like that. Just, when you're
7 hiring, we have to announce in advance of when we're hiring
8 apprentices or when we're interviewing apprentices. It's a
9 complicated process for us and any company that wants to
10 come in and have different standards comes into the council
11 and applies.

12 And when they apply, as I said earlier in my
13 statement, there was an electrical contractor in the
14 Northeast who came up and wanted to change his ratios while
15 he had a half dozen or so people laid off. The council
16 said, well, you're not even at your ratio now -- and we're
17 not at our ratio. We're not at 4:1 depending on what the
18 craft is, 3:1 or anything.

19 We have 133,000 construction workers in
20 Pennsylvania. So if we had, you know, 266,000 construction
21 workers that we had as first-year apprentices, we'd be at
22 ratio. And I don't think that, you know, we really want to
23 have that many people working at 50 percent because we'd
24 probably get every job there is right now that's out for
25 bid. But we just find that the continuity that's been

1 established and the way it's been processed, I don't see
2 the discrimination.

3 If someone can't come in and give a good reason
4 at a hearing, and I don't know how many of you have
5 attended the hearings.

6 I think Representative Mackenzie has and Neilson.
7 You've attended the apprenticeship hearings before.

8 There's a whole list of questions that are asked
9 of the contractor to find out if they can have a different
10 ratio and that's in the construction industry. As I said
11 before, what happens in the other industries, we, as the
12 building trades, we're not going to put any input in what's
13 happening to a machinist's company or a bakery or that.

14 If the council decides that, you know, it's safe
15 to have somebody working around a grease fire by themselves
16 while the other guy's in the bathroom, that's fine with us.
17 You know, but as far as discrimination, I find that a very
18 strange consideration to be using in this venue.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: All right. Our next
20 member with a question is Representative Krueger.

21 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
22 Thank you, gentlemen, so much for testifying before us
23 today. I remember a hearing on similar bills last session
24 and some robust conversation.

25 I believe that apprenticeship programs are a

1 pathway to family-sustaining wages and also essential for
2 consumer safety. When we talk about the workers who come
3 through apprenticeship programs, we're talking about the
4 pipelayers and pipefitters who are laying pipelines that
5 are carrying dangerous natural gas liquids. We're talking
6 about the operating engineers who are operating heavy
7 equipment, and I believe that well-trained apprentices make
8 well-trained workers who keep us safe.

9 So Mr. Smith, I've got a question for you. I've
10 had an opportunity to tour the carpenter's training program
11 in Philadelphia and I was very, very impressed with what I
12 saw. I also was there on the day of the graduation for the
13 Sisters and the Brotherhood Pre-Apprenticeship Training
14 Program which had a 100 percent graduation rate that day of
15 women of color who were then going into the carpenter's
16 apprenticeship program.

17 Can you talk about why your programs are really
18 considered the gold standard and how you address safety
19 training with your apprentices?

20 MR. SMITH: Well, in Philadelphia since 1945, you
21 know, we've graduated almost 15,000 apprentices. That's a
22 lot of lives affected. That's a lot of people that went
23 home safe at the end of the day, but I really think that,
24 you know, the safety aspect is where it's at.

25 Our apprentices come in. They get OSHA 30

1 training in their first year of their apprenticeship
2 program. They have fall protection training, aerial lift
3 certification, and legislation changes all the time. We
4 also even try to get them all rigging certified so they can
5 signal a crane, due to legislation within different
6 municipalities on crane legislation, because that is a
7 total detriment to the public around if we have somebody
8 signaling a crane with no skills or credentials or
9 training.

10 So I really think that not only are the skills
11 impacted in the apprenticeship, training of the skills, but
12 the safety aspect is also hand in hand with our skill
13 enhancement as well.

14 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: And Mr. Smith, you know,
15 people are talking about lower ratios for union programs.
16 My understanding is that unions have a higher ratio than
17 1:1 and some of them here in Pennsylvania are as high as
18 7:1. What's your ratio program? What's your ratio
19 program?

20 MR. SMITH: 4:1 in Pennsylvania, yeah.

21 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: 4:1 in Pennsylvania.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. SMITH: We would like to have 4:1. We try to
24 hit 4:1, but we may be a little more heavy on the
25 journeymen side than apprentice.

1 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: Okay. And then the
2 other testifiers were asked about the graduation rate for
3 their apprenticeship programs. What's the graduation rate
4 for your program?

5 MR. SMITH: 75 percent between Philadelphia for
6 the State of Pennsylvania.

7 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: So 75 percent as opposed
8 to 60 percent and even as low as 58 percent for the non-
9 union programs we heard from today?

10 MR. SMITH: Yes, yes.

11 REPRESENTATIVE KRUEGER: Okay. Thank you.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Next, Representative
13 Gleim.

14 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Thank you, Chairman.

15 I just want to lay a little groundwork here. So
16 I come from an excavation company and Gleim had a pre-
17 apprenticeship program and an apprenticeship program that
18 was certified by the state and it was so safe and effective
19 that Lancaster Technical Institute took our curriculum and
20 are implementing it today, of which the union shops use.
21 So I just wanted to lay that groundwork first.

22 And I also wanted to say to Mr. Sirianni -- I
23 mean, he had stated that, you know, these non-union shops
24 come in and they request a different ratio. I think what
25 they're requesting is the same ratio that union shops have,

1 and my bill actually says whatever the union shops have,
2 whether it's 7:1, whether it's 4:1, whatever it is, is what
3 the non-union shops get.

4 And I also want to clarify for everyone that any
5 public work project, either a union shop or non-union shop
6 work on, have to have the same safety modification rate of
7 under one. So anyone that is working on those projects is
8 safe and they should be allowed to have the same type of
9 opportunities. And I think that's where, you know, Mr.
10 Brubaker is coming in and saying that the fact that they're
11 not being treated the same is discriminatory in nature,
12 okay. I think that that's something that I'm hearing from
13 all of the trades myself.

14 And I do have the data because I did download the
15 data of all of the companies that are working on public
16 work projects today that have a MOD rate of under one, they
17 have the same average, so there is no difference between
18 those two.

19 I also wanted to make another statement. I don't
20 know who handed out this piece of paper or this document
21 here, but inside of it when they're talking about
22 completions by registration between unions and non-unions,
23 over the past 10 years, the non-unions are actually ahead
24 of the unions, 20.6 to 15.3. So there are inroads being
25 made right now. I think we keep going back 20 years to the

1 same data and I would just encourage you to look at the
2 last 10 years of data rather than the last 20 years of
3 data.

4 Finally, the last thing I do want to say is I
5 come from Carlisle, PA and the CTC program that Carlisle
6 High School has, has enrolled the most students of any CTC
7 program in the state. And we don't have the opportunity of
8 being in Philadelphia, okay. A lot of our companies out
9 where we are, which is more rural don't have the driving
10 distance to one of those programs that you are talking
11 about. And I would really like to allow these students the
12 same opportunities that the students in Philadelphia and,
13 you know, the higher population areas have.

14 So one of the questions that I did have for Mr.
15 Smith is, the only thing that we are asking, at least in my
16 bill, is parity at the level of the union contracts. Would
17 you be opposed to something like that?

18 MR. SMITH: Well, as far as ratios?

19 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Yeah.

20 MR. SMITH: Well, I think what we have right now
21 is for, you know, public-funded projects. I think it's a
22 4:1 ratio which I think is a fair ratio.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: But if they do -- if a
24 contract does get passed that is a lower ratio, you would
25 offer that same ratio then? If a non-union came in and

1 appealed to the board and said, you know, they're using
2 3:1, we would like a 3:1. You would approve that then?

3 MR. SMITH: I think we're going to exceed the 4:1
4 with journeymen no matter what the ratio is.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: In construction?

6 MR. SMITH: Correct, in construction.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Okay, in the high risk.

8 And I just wanted to make that --

9 MR. SMITH: In all construction.

10 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Okay.

11 MR. SMITH: Because I don't know who's
12 determining the high risk or the low risk or the medium
13 risk. I don't know where that's going to come from or who
14 is -- if it's even been thought to that extent on who's
15 going to make that determination. I don't know who's going
16 to make that.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: So my bill just takes it
18 from 4:1 to 3:1. Would you be opposed to just that one for
19 everybody? This is everybody. Would you be opposed to
20 that?

21 MR. SMITH: I would like construction to be
22 separate, and if you have to do something to develop growth
23 among different economies of scale, absolutely then, you
24 know, that's fine, but I would like construction to stay.
25 My opinion.

1 REPRESENTATIVE GLEIM: Okay. So that's all I
2 have right now. Thank you.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you.

4 Next, Dan Miller.

5 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
6 and I'll try to be quick.

7 Sir, I just want to clarify. Can you tell me
8 again what you said the Jersey ratio was? I may have
9 misheard. What was the Jersey ratio?

10 MR. SEILHAMMER: 1:1.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: 1:1. I'm sorry, that was
12 you? I apologize. 1:1.

13 MR. SEILHAMMER: They're a BAT state.

14 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: I'm sorry, sir?

15 MR. SEILHAMMER: They're a BAT state so they fall
16 under the federal statute.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: The ABC, how many
18 contractors you guys have in PA?

19 MR. BRUBAKER: In PA, we have 1,400 contractors
20 and 67,000 employees, just in Pennsylvania.

21 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: The average size of your
22 contractor firm?

23 MR. BRUBAKER: I don't know. I don't have those
24 statistics, but --

25 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Ballpark.

1 MR. BRUBAKER: -- we serve a lot of small
2 contractors. I'm guessing could be in the 15 to 20 person.

3 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. So you guess, and
4 that's okay, 15 to 20 is your guess to the average?

5 MR. BRUBAKER: Just a guess, yes.

6 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay.

7 MR. BRUBAKER: I don't have those statistics,
8 but...

9 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Sir, did you talk about
10 60 percent of the wage? Was that your testimony? I forget
11 who said 60 percent.

12 MR. SEILHAMMER: Him.

13 MR. BRUBAKER: 60 -- me?

14 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Yeah, yeah. Again, maybe
15 I misheard. I thought somebody had said 60 percent.

16 MR. BRUBAKER: Our apprentices. Our apprentices
17 start at 60 percent of the journeyman wage in a four-year
18 program. In a three-year program, it's 70 percent.

19 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: And just so I understand,
20 60 percent of like what? What are you guys -- what would
21 it be of?

22 MR. BRUBAKER: Of the journeyman wage.

23 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Which would be, in your
24 scenario, typically what?

25 MR. BRUBAKER: It varies by company. I mean,

1 some companies could be 60 percent of -- you know, the
2 average journeyman wage might be between \$22 and \$25 maybe.

3 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. Thank you, sir.

4 MR. BRUBAKER: It's hard to say.

5 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: I'm sorry. Thank you
6 very much.

7 Mr. Ramsay, I apologize. Yeah.

8 MR. RAMSAY: Yes.

9 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Sir, I know we had a lot
10 of questions for you. Just so I'm clarifying it though.
11 L&I supports or does not support this package of bills?

12 MR. RAMSAY: L&I does not support.

13 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. And sir, I was a
14 little bit -- I was hearing something about hundreds of
15 thousands of comments. I get a little -- it's interesting
16 just because I'm like, okay, so I think we're trying to
17 talk about bringing some aspects or closing a state
18 operation down and punting to the feds in some way. What I
19 was told was that there are hundreds of thousands of
20 comments that came in regarding regulations from the feds
21 and I wasn't sure what those comments were basically geared
22 towards; problems, support. Have you guys analyzed or
23 given any -- like, do we have any feedback as to what the
24 comments were in relation to the feds?

25 MR. RAMSAY: So the comments that came on were in

1 regards to the industry-recognized apprenticeship programs.
2 It's a program that runs parallel to the registered
3 apprenticeship system. It's something that they have been
4 working through at the federal level. The comments were
5 sent into them. They weren't sent into the Pennsylvania
6 State Apprenticeship Office, so we didn't get those
7 comments. So we don't have them.

8 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: So you don't...

9 MR. RAMSAY: Those have not been released to us,
10 those comments.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: Okay. All right. Thank
12 you.

13 And just in closing, I know one of the comments
14 came up to with where we are ranking with success overall.
15 I think somebody said tenth, if I recall. You know, I
16 actually had a conversation not too long ago as well with a
17 friend of mine from West Virginia and one of the things
18 that he brought up was there are two big differences in his
19 opinion regarding Pennsylvania programs. Number one is
20 better quality and he says they are better quality programs
21 than what he had run through. The second thing was is that
22 he said that too many Pennsylvanians, almost going to your
23 point, I think, are not coming in with a foundation
24 knowledge base to build off of.

25 So that you're more likely to find -- because

1 Pennsylvania is not doing a good enough job as yet from the
2 school-aged kids, you're not having the base of knowledge
3 that other states are when they enter the program. So you
4 are having, to some degree, I'll say a washout for lack of
5 a better term, but a washout of that these young people, in
6 particular, perhaps, or to some degree were not as informed
7 and ready and prepared to go in as some states; again,
8 referencing Ohio, West Virginia in particular, but some
9 states may be. So I thought that was interesting.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you.

12 Representative Tobash.

13 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: Thank you. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman.

15 So just a couple things. We talked a lot about
16 safety right here and Mr. Brubaker brought it up.

17 So Mr. Sirianni, do you have any empirical data
18 that shows that Pennsylvania is safer than other states?
19 We have 26 that are adhering to the federal standard.
20 Another dozen are 1:1 ratio. Pennsylvania is really an
21 outlier when you take a look at the map that's provided by
22 ABC. Do you have statistics on safety in Pennsylvania
23 compared to most of the other states in the United States?

24 MR. BRUBAKER: Not with me, but I'll get you that
25 information if you'd like.

1 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: That'd be important. And
2 I guess what dovetails with that, and the Chairman
3 mentioned it, you know, it's not my belief that we've got
4 workers' compensation rates that are a lot lower than other
5 states, particularly our neighboring states. Can you
6 provide --

7 MR. SIRINNI: That's because we have all the
8 apprentices.

9 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: -- any information
10 showing workers' comp rates compared to other states?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's the good training.

12 MR. SIRIANNI: That's because we have all the
13 apprentices.

14 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: So I guess that's it. So
15 I can tell you I've been in the General Assembly for a
16 little while. We're not always that good at math,
17 particularly subtraction. If we got a program that's not
18 working, we're not really good at subtracting those
19 programs and getting rid of them.

20 Can you tell me any information that you've got
21 how the apprenticeship dynamic that we've got in the State
22 of Pennsylvania is facilitating growth in the construction
23 industry and our economy in PA? Any specifics on how you
24 think it's really working to help facilitate a great and
25 vibrant sector?

1 MR. SIRIANNI: Well, first and foremost, across
2 the board, apprenticeship awareness has been one of the
3 main focuses of the Workforce Investment Board on a state
4 level and working with community colleges, chamber of
5 commerce, labor unions, public and private sector people.
6 We have been promoting coming into the construction
7 industry and helping employers across the board, regardless
8 of whether they're union or non-union, to have people that
9 are aware of the industry and the benefits of it.

10 When people graduate from our programs, they make
11 about 80 grand a year. It's not a bad income for someone
12 who has gone to a program for four years, or five,
13 depending on the craft, has no debt when they get out of
14 our program, plus, we invest over \$300 million of our own
15 money out of our own pockets to train and educate these
16 people.

17 So when we see money going out to other programs,
18 and I'm not saying whether, you know, it's in construction
19 or not, that's why I brought up the accountability issue to
20 track the people that are having these programs to make
21 sure that the people that graduate are getting a job in
22 that sector that they were trained for and then follow them
23 and make sure that the money was invested well by the
24 taxpayer in Pennsylvania.

25 I think it improves our economy in general just

1 to have young people interested in other things other than
2 going to college. Listen, I have nothing against people
3 going to college. My dad beat it into my head that I was
4 going to go to college, and I did for two years. I
5 couldn't drink anymore so I left, okay.

6 So I ended up being a construction worker which I
7 was fairly successful at. I mean, I never thought I'd be
8 sitting here in front of all you state reps, state
9 legislators talking about issues of education and training.
10 I'm the guy that used to say the dog ate my report in high
11 school, okay. But going through training and education and
12 just through the years of working with people that were
13 better educated than me and knew more than I did, I learned
14 to listen, and listening is the best thing we can do in
15 general and that's why I appreciate this committee
16 listening to all these different viewpoints. I don't agree
17 with all the legislation, but I think that if we all work
18 together, we can make Pennsylvania a better and happier
19 place for all our families.

20 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: Look, I love the fact
21 that we are honoring people that have skills, skills in the
22 trades. Representative Harkins and I, we got to chair a
23 subcommittee on vocational education and career readiness
24 and our focus is exactly that; that we need to have
25 applicable education to the jobs that are available. But I

1 just really failed to hear your exact examples of how you
2 think that the apprenticeship program that we've got in PA
3 is facilitating that. I know we're working hard on it in
4 many fronts, but you know, I'm going to switch gears here -
5 -

6 MR. SIRIANNI: Sure.

7 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: -- and ask Mr. Brubaker,
8 I've heard that the program that we've got here sets up
9 some roadblocks and impediments to growth and getting
10 people into these skilled trades positions that are really
11 valuable in the marketplace today. Do you have any
12 specific examples how the program that we've got in
13 Pennsylvania is holding us back?

14 MR. BRUBAKER: Well, certainly I gave my own
15 example of a company that I owned and we had CTC students
16 that we couldn't enroll in the apprenticeship program
17 because of the ratio issue. I've seen particularly on the
18 -- you know, in the apprenticeship council, we've certainly
19 turned down programs or refused to consider programs that
20 were requesting lower ratios than the mandated 4:1 on a
21 non-joint program, which I think is -- again, it's slowing
22 down workforce development. We've had people come and
23 testify that they can't grow their small companies or their
24 small portions of their companies at a 4:1 ratio. It would
25 take too long, you know.

1 We're at a point now where we really have a
2 difficult time hiring skilled workers. I don't think
3 that's any secret. So to say that we can just hire someone
4 and we don't have to worry about the apprenticeship ratio,
5 you know, maybe 15 years ago that may have been the case,
6 but I can tell you today as we sit here, that is far from
7 the case. Those people just aren't out there.

8 So you know, the most logical way is to train
9 your people, train people as they're coming in. And when
10 we're training young, entry-level people, you know, we're
11 doing a good job with pre-apprenticeship and there's no
12 space for them to go. I truly think we're going to see a
13 huge bottleneck, even worse than it currently is because
14 we've done a good job. Both sides of the aisle here have
15 done a good job of creating these apprenticeship programs
16 to fill in the funnel. But where are they going to go when
17 employers can't hire them because of the ratio?

18 REPRESENTATIVE TOBASH: Thank you so much. I
19 just want to thank everybody for their testimony.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having the hearing
21 today.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: And last, we'll hear from
23 Representative Harkins. But before that, I'd like to call
24 on Representative Keefer to recognize some guests that she
25 has here today.

1 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER. Thank you. And very
2 relevant to this today, I have in the back of the room,
3 Dover High School career and tech students who -- they have
4 many NOCTI --

5 (Applause)

6 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: So I think they're a
7 testament. I mean, they are preparing the students to
8 enter these programs and they need the opportunity. We've
9 got to find some common ground here to get these studies
10 from that point to a place of employment. I think there's
11 some common ground that we can find here.

12 Thank you, guys, for all coming.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: And Chairman Harkins.

14 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: Thank you, Chairman
15 Cox.

16 This has been a great discussion this morning. I
17 really wish we had a couple more hours to discuss some of
18 the issues that we've been volleying back and forth. I
19 think it's great to have this kind of dialog, and to get
20 this kind of input is invaluable to all of us when we have
21 to make these decisions.

22 I also think back to when we run for office. We
23 all talk about putting people back to work and we're going
24 to make people's lives better and we're going to do all
25 these wonderful things for people, and then when we get

1 here we kind of lose track of where we need to go and how
2 we need to get there.

3 As Representative Tobash said, we traveled the
4 state a few years ago with the technical and trades caucus.
5 We saw a lot of the things that you hear on the national
6 level, the state level, and the local level of people who
7 want their kids to go to college. They want the best for
8 their children, but at the same time, they don't understand
9 the limits that some of these kids have or some of the
10 things that maybe they're better at than other people are
11 working with their hands.

12 I think back to the Erie School District last
13 year. It's been a rocky road for them. They received an
14 abundance of money from the state and they're using it
15 wisely. They're using it prudently and they're trying to
16 rehab and redo many of their buildings. They had a
17 disconnect, though. They wanted to eliminate the
18 apprenticeship program entirely with their workforce. With
19 the help of Mr. Sirianni and some others, we were able to
20 meet with some of the board of directors who didn't even
21 understand what apprenticeship programs were about. I
22 think that's what the disconnect is around the state. Many
23 people don't understand what's involved and how -- the
24 positive spin that can come from that.

25 We talk about other states. 26 other states and

1 D.C., they don't participate. I think that's often
2 overlooked, and again, we can look to other states and see
3 what they do that's successful, see what things are the
4 pitfalls for them and where we can maybe shore things up
5 and come up with better things, but move forward in a
6 positive way with that.

7 Concerns with turning anything over to the
8 federal government at this point in time. A show of hands,
9 who wants to throw anything in the hands of the federal
10 government at this point? Not me.

11 The WIB boards and everything else are something
12 that very much needs to be looked at. There's a concern
13 that much of the money that goes into those isn't accounted
14 for. I know we've experienced that in my area and my
15 region. We've worked with the administration and it's a
16 plus to the administration. They've been very helpful in
17 screening and cleaning up some of those problems that we've
18 had.

19 For the entire panel, though, how many of you
20 have worked in construction and on a construction site?
21 Good. What craft, if I might ask?

22 MR. SEILHAMMER: Electrical.

23 MR. BRUBAKER: Electrical.

24 MR. SMITH: Carpenter.

25 MR. SIRIANNI: Glazier.

1 REPRESENTATIVE NEILSON: Electrical.

2 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: Electrical here also,
3 Eddie.

4 What was the general cost of the projects that
5 you worked on?

6 MR. SEILHAMMER: I'm sorry. What was that?

7 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: What was the general
8 cost of the projects that you worked on?

9 MR. SEILHAMMER: Upwards of 7.5 million.

10 MR. BRUBAKER: Thirty million.

11 MR. SMITH: I was a superintendent on a \$35
12 million project, but I've been on \$100 million projects.

13 MR. SIRIANNI: And I've worked on residential
14 too.

15 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: Have you had any
16 apprentices work with you?

17 MR. SEILHAMMER: Yes.

18 MR. BRUBAKER: Absolutely.

19 MR. SMITH: Yes.

20 MR. SIRIANNI: Yes.

21 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: What was the feeling
22 with that? Are you in favor of that or did you -- was it a
23 learning curve for you or...

24 MR. SEILHAMMER: Happy to have the apprentices.

25 MR. BRUBAKER: Yeah.

1 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: Likewise?

2 MR. SIRIANNI: I've had apprentices work with me
3 in the field, probably five to six different ones in a
4 small company that I was with Harrisburg Glass. We had
5 appropriate ratios and we tried to be working with one of
6 the apprentices on my crew, and another week, we had a
7 different apprentice on another one.

8 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: For ABC, how many
9 apprentices do you currently have?

10 MR. BRUBAKER: ABC PA has a little over 910
11 apprentices currently registered just in PA.

12 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: How many apprentices
13 did you graduate last year?

14 MR. BRUBAKER: I don't have that statistic.

15 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: If you could find
16 that for me, I'd appreciate it.

17 MR. BRUBAKER: Okay.

18 MINORITY CHAIRMAN HARKINS: And again, just to go
19 back, I think we are all on the same page as far as wanting
20 to move the state forward. I heard that from Mr. Sirianni.
21 What I hear though from employers in my area isn't anything
22 at all about apprenticeship programs; it's about passing
23 drug tests and providing people with driver's license that
24 can't get them. That seems to be the main thing that I
25 hear and we heard when we traveled around the state.

1 The experience that these people gain from the
2 apprenticeship program is invaluable, and anyone who isn't
3 experienced with it, I would encourage you to look into it
4 further and tour some of these training facilities. It is
5 a real eye opener. I took some of my colleagues around
6 Western Pennsylvania last fall, Democrat and Republican,
7 and we all were astounded at what was provided and the
8 quality of workmanship that comes out of people.

9 We don't have buildings collapsing like other
10 states. We did have the Philly crane that went down. I
11 cringe when I see those things. You know, I think there's
12 a lot of room for improvement. I think we have a great
13 base, but I look forward to working with everyone going
14 forward. Thank you.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN COX: Thank you.

17 Again, I'd like to thank all of our panelists for
18 being here today. I'd like to thank the prime sponsors for
19 putting the legislation out there for us to discuss. I'm
20 pretty sure this is not going to be the end of our
21 discussion. In fact, I do plan on taking the next steps in
22 moving this forward.

23 Any stakeholders, people who have additional
24 comments, suggestions, et cetera on what we can do to
25 improve this process, I do intend to keep things moving.

1 So again, stakeholders, please bring it to the attention of
2 the prime sponsors, Executive Director John Scarpato, or
3 myself, and we can work on making this legislation and
4 making Pennsylvania more business-friendly, more
5 apprenticeship-friendly. I think there are some
6 improvements that can and should be made and I look forward
7 to working through those.

8 That is all for now, and without any objections,
9 I'll adjourn the meeting.

10 Thank you.

11 (Hearing concluded at 11:05 a.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings are a true and accurate transcription produced from audio on the said proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

Jennifer Ferenz
Transcriptionist
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