



**Testimony of George Hayden  
President  
Hayden Power Group**

Public Hearing on “Barriers to Apprenticeships and Training”

House Labor & Industry Committee Subcommittee on Employment and Unemployment  
June 2, 2021

Chairwoman Klunk, Chairman Dellosa, Chairman Cox, Chairman Mullery, and members of the Subcommittee on Employment and Unemployment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on barriers to apprenticeship and training.

My name is George Hayden. I am the President of Hayden Power Group.

I am also a board member of the Associated Builders and Contractors Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter.

George J. Hayden Inc., DBA Hayden Power Group, was founded by my parents, George J., and Florence Hayden in 1975. In the 46 years of business, we have grown from a handful of electricians working out of my parents’ kitchen and garage to 130+ employees working out of multiple locations, including the construction of a new facility which will house our Hazleton employees. Our business encompasses commercial, industrial, institutional and all types of electrical service work, as well as substation power work.

My testimony today will focus on my over 30 years of experience with our company sponsored apprenticeship program, and my thoughts on how we can invest in our future workforce with fair and equal practices to help gain more family sustained wages in our construction industry.

ABC submitted written remarks that provide details on safety and jobs data, along with identifying other barriers. I would encourage committee members to read that testimony and follow-up with staff if you have questions.

We are a principled company that believes in apprenticeship programs. Our future generations desire a hands-on career-based training that promotes personal and professional development. If we do not educate and train people, they cannot succeed. That is why we invest so much into apprenticeships, training, and safety at Hayden.

We currently have 20 registered apprentices in our program certified with the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Council, as well as the United States Department of Labor. Our curriculum is accredited through the National Center for Construction Education (NCCER), the most widely used construction curriculum in the United States.

The Hayden Power Group Apprenticeship Program is a four-year, tuition-based program. Registered apprentices receive on-the-job training totaling 8,000 hours (2,000 hours per year) in the electrical field in accord with national standards. The related classroom instruction meets the requirement of 150 hours for each year of the programs. Classes are taught onsite at our office by some of our own certified instructors, who in some cases also completed our apprenticeship programs and are now certified master journeymen electrician. We have also adopted a blended based learning that has integrated technology and digital media to our overall program to allow flexibility with work.

There are huge opportunities in the northeast and central PA for individuals to enter high-paying jobs, but we have hit a hurdle in our ability to grow our program for all those seeking alternative learning paths. Much has to do with the ratio differences.

Registered apprenticeship programs that are non-joint – meaning non-union – are required to have four journeypersons to each apprentice. Think about that: four electricians must supervise one individual. No employer in the private sector assigns four supervisors to one trainee. It is inefficient and does not make good business sense.

Here is another thing that does not make sense: If a registered apprenticeship program sponsor is a joint employer – meaning union – that employer can set whatever ratio they want through a collective bargaining agreement. The only people this hinders are the students eager to learn a trade but are not able.

If we had a more level playing field, our company, along with others, would be able to hire, train and certify more of our future leaders in the trades. By adding more apprentices through pre- apprenticeship programs, career center “school to work programs,” community college approvals, and overall employer sponsored apprenticeship programs, we could train our future workforce in all trades.

These programs will allow more employers to grow their businesses and possibly allow these new skilled teams to own and operate their own businesses which would increase the overall tax base in PA. Apprentices have an opportunity to increase their wages by going through a vigorous training program and on job training (OJT) hours, which earns pay increases every 1,000 hours.

Rep. Gleim introduced legislation that would establish consistent ratio rules for apprenticeship programs. That policy makes sense to me. Everyone should operate under the same set of rules. I do not understand why anyone would be opposed to fair and open competition.

I understand in past debates that safety has been raised as an area of concern. Let’s talk about safety. The safety and health of our employees is of primary importance as they are our most important resource. Hayden Power Group focuses safety efforts on prevention of worksite



hazards, including unsafe acts and conditions which are the primary causes of accident, injuries, illnesses fatalities and property damage. Safety is never taken for granted here at the Hayden Power Group. We have been blessed to participate and be recognized for many safety awards over the years to prove our commitment to safety.

All our employees are taught in proper safety methods starting on their first day during our workplace basic new hire safety orientation. Our field technicians have OSHA 10-hour certification training, and our management team and foremen are OSHA 30-hour certified. Our company boasts a state-certified safety committee, and our project managers, foremen, and team leaders assess the jobsites by preparing Jobsite Safety Analyses (JSA) for each of our worksites to ensure proper practices are enforced. In conjunction with our voluntary partnership with OSHA, we continually assess our jobsites to remove any potential hazards because our priority is workplace safety for all. It should come as no surprise that our electricians maintain current certifications in First Aid, CPR, AED, and bloodborne pathogens; Lockout/Tagout; NFPA 70E; and Lift training. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) certifies our electricians, requiring extensive yearly training and testing.

In addition to our annual company-wide safety meetings, we hold an annual company-wide safety training day. We have a certified safety committee program with a full-time safety coordinator along with being an OSHA partner recognized company with ABC at our local chapter. With a low-incident safety record, it provides a key indicator of the efficiency and safe practices of our employees.

Let me also dispel the myth that we want a lower ratio to gain a competitive advantage or cut labor costs. Nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, the opposite is true – joint employers have the tools to adjust how many skilled or unskilled workers they want on a job. Talk about a competitive advantage. What we want is a level playing field or parity and the opportunity to train as many young people in the trades as possible. This is more important than ever as our work skilled forces in the trades continues to age.

We are in the middle of an economic recovery like no other. We have more jobs than people to fill them. We have people looking for good-paying jobs, long-lasting careers, and family sustaining wages. The federal government is talking about millions of jobs that will be created through an infrastructure package. Who is going to do the work if we do not have people trained? In ABC's packet of information, chapter presidents say they could easily grow their apprenticeship programs by 30% through parity, and statewide an additional 56,000 apprentices could be trained if all programs had a level playing field.

This issue has been talked about for decades and nothing has been done. With the state of the economy and the amount of training that is needed, there is no better time than now to do something about these rules. Non-joint employers make up 87% of the construction industry.

By not leveling the playing field, you are holding back a major part of the workforce that has the ability and capacity to do more.

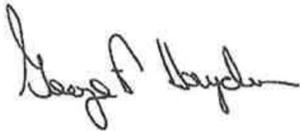
If you are looking to remove barriers; if you are looking at improving workforce development; if you want more people in these jobs, then remove these barriers and get people on the pathway to success.

We are in a most critical time in needing training of new tradesmen and women for the construction industry and will not be able to keep up with the future building requirements.

Madam Chair, thank you for holding this hearing. For far too long we have lived under these discriminatory and outdated standards. There is no better time than now to act.

I would be happy to answer any questions the subcommittee may have.

Thank You,



George F Hayden  
Hayden Power Group  
President