



April 1, 2025

Senate Tipping, Chair
Representative Roeder, Chair
Distinguished Members of the Labor Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Sent Electronically

Re: LD 1117 "An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce Through Certified Preapprenticeship Training Programs"

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and Distinguished Members of the Labor Committee,

I am sharing our views on LD 1117, "An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce Through Certified Preapprenticeship Training Programs." AGC Maine manages apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs for the commercial construction industry. Our team provides ongoing education, placement, and advisement and develops integrated programs with Maine businesses, education, and workforce service providers to advance opportunities for Maine residents. Our programs have assisted high school students, incumbent workers, new Americans, and adults interested in pursuing a construction career. We have extensive experience in this area.

We support ongoing funding for preapprenticeship and view it as a valuable introductory program for those exploring career options. Through our Maine Construction Academy, we introduce students ages 16-20 years old to hands-on experience in a multitude of crafts. This process helps connect students to their interests, and we can then assist them in pursuing their goals. The pathway can vary; some may continue with a preapprenticeship in a specific craft, others may enter a registered apprenticeship program or choose a direct hire position, while some might select a higher education pathway through a community college or another institution. Many younger participants will continue their education in CTE programs offered by their local education district before selecting their longer-term plan. Language in this bill will limit the options for preapprentices if we choose to qualify under the proposed law as it dictates *"Certified preapprenticeship training programs that cannot produce proof that graduates are employed in the field of their preapprenticeship after a period of 6 months following successful completion of their certified preapprenticeship training program or are represented by a labor organization are ineligible for grants under this subsection."*

In our experience, this might be counted in years for our younger participants, depending on the pathway. That doesn't demonstrate failure; it could elevate the participants' earning potential and certainly their knowledge if they choose a pathway with additional education. We don't feel six months is long enough; the path should be designed for the craft and the individual. At 16 or 17 years old, our goal is to introduce the broad array of options available and help them along that journey.

Additionally, we encourage the Committee to examine the bill to ensure it complies with Federal policies. While we have found success in training individuals from disadvantaged communities, it's imperative that any law passed that governs eligibility conforms to changing Federal mandates if the program will leverage Federal dollars. AGC Maine remains committed to training all interested and eligible individuals when the opportunity arises.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our views on this bill and will be available during the work session to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "K Flagg".

Kelly Flagg, Executive Director