



# AGC MAINE

AN ASSOCIATION OF THE AGC OF AMERICA

**Testimony of Matthew Marks in Opposition to LD 1539**  
**"An Act to Promote a Diverse, More Experienced Construction**  
**Workforce and Ensure High-quality Careers by Increasing**  
**Registered Apprenticeship Programs**  
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Joint Committee on Labor and Housing  
April 19, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing my name is Matthew Marks, I am a Principal at Cornerstone Government Affairs, and here today to speak on behalf of my client The Associated General Contractors of Maine. AGC Maine is a statewide commercial construction trade association and a Chapter of AGC America.

AGC Maine is opposed to the recommended changes in this bill and believes the Department of Labor and the State Workforce Board's Apprenticeship Council is better equipped to provide specific feedback on craft applications for new apprenticeships rather than the broad changes to all programs in the construction industry.

We are also concerned that these requirements could discourage organizations, or sponsor entities from offering apprenticeships for certain trades and thereby decreasing opportunities where it would generally be a benefit for both the apprentice and the industry. While some craft positions require much longer field and classroom hours, there are situations where the minimum today can create opportunities for apprentices that might not naturally be inclined to traditional training.

The proposed hours of OJT and Classroom Hours in this bill are not proportional and appear to be arbitrary. The Federal Minimum in 29 U.S.C. §50 - Promotion of labor standards of apprenticeship, are reflected in Maine State Law as 2,000 hours of OJT and 144 hours of classroom education respectively. Most construction crafts will exceed the OJT hours, and the Department has resources and often recommendations when a sponsor is preparing a new craft for an apprenticeship.

It's also important to consider that the apprentice is often attending additional classroom education and field training not directly associated with their apprenticeship pathway. Company-wide specific safety training, additional certifications, industry-wide training, and other field training on equipment that might be generalized for a company. That continues throughout a construction career but might not be specifically associated with the goal of the apprenticeship training on specific craft competencies associated with the career they've selected.

Some at-risk populations could benefit from an introduction to the industry either through a pre-apprenticeship or craft positions that are at or near the minimum standards if the individual has been challenged with employment and or education. That entry into the industry could provide stability and open doors that create additional growth. Working in the construction industry is continuous learning in their career, but we believe that these recommendations are not warranted. Thank you, I am happy to answer your questions.