



AGC MAINE

THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Matthew Marks Against LD 2280

“An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Workforce Through Pre-Apprenticeship Training Programs”
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
March 27, 2024

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 which was founded in 1918 with 27,000 contractors, suppliers, and service providers.

AGC Maine has both pre-apprenticeships and formally registered apprenticeships approved by the Maine Department of Labor. The value of pre-apprenticeship is the introduction to a program for career exploration. In Maine, many of our businesses are considered small businesses. We’ve found that introducing apprenticeships to some businesses can be challenging, and adoption is made much easier by offering pre-apprenticeship. Hence, both the business and employees have some experience with a formal process.

The change from certification to registration creates additional regulatory compliance and could deter additional industries from participating. Maine should continue recruiting both businesses and participants into the program, which has a benefit beyond the experiences of both interested parties.

Recently AGC Maine enrolled 18 New Americans into a pre-apprenticeship program that was completed earlier this month, and 115 youth applicants including 17 who graduated in Dexter on Monday. The flexibility of Maine’s current program allowed AGC Maine to adapt the lessons for individuals who spoke very little English or had no experience and respond to those opportunities quickly. Today, those same 18 individuals are on a career path with a formalized apprenticeship at local companies.

Consider the value of offering additional apprenticeships in today’s employment market. We believe that adding similar requirements as a formal registered apprenticeship may reduce adoption. In our experience, companies that participate in a pre-apprenticeship, which introduces education and on-the-job training, overwhelmingly request our assistance to establish a registered apprenticeship.

MaineDOL has been forward-thinking concerning Federal rulemaking that just closed public comments. We urge the Committee to allow the current pre-apprenticeship process where businesses work directly with the Department to accomplish the shared goals of recruiting and educating future apprentices and respectfully request each of you to vote against this bill.