

House Oversight Subcommittee on Economic Growth
Hearing Held - October 25, 2023, 4pm

Cover Letter to Rep. Bush (Ranking Member) requesting insertion into hearing record...
*** Shared with other Members on the subcommittee in personalized form

The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) is supported by more than 3,500 construction firms specializing in industrial, commercial, residential, architectural and specialty sheet metal and air conditioning construction in public and private markets throughout the United States. **On behalf of SMACNA, I want to submit our endorsement and statement supporting strong and vigorously enforced DOL Registered Apprenticeship programs (RAPs).** Our statement includes many enhanced RAP reform recommendations to make long overdue registered apprenticeship improvements. These proposed RAP upgrades would better enforce the quality of registered apprenticeship programs in line with the views of our labor partner in the JATCs... SMART. These recommendations were submitted to the DOL and the White House Task for on Labor Empowerment.

We offer these reform suggestions for the hearing record today and for future hearings. Encouraging quality RAPs while also penalizing sham apprenticeship training will send an important message and boost the interest in high skilled construction during a time of exploding opportunities thanks to the enactment of the CHIPS and Science Act, the Infrastructure Act and the tax incentive driven IRA. All three have created a record response creating projects and job openings never imagined before. We applaud the efforts to expand quality RAPs rather than appease those long opposed to investing in their workers as well as registered apprenticeship programs.

Simply put, the nation has a skilled labor shortage. Additionally, non-union businesses invested inadequately or cut corners on “so called” skilled labor training. This pattern of undercutting and undermining skilled labor training has been endemic in the construction industry, often a tactic to cut labor costs when competing with those investing heavily sponsoring registered apprenticeship programs. Now, many of these same firms are seeking public assistance and grants to local training programs to help them catch up to exploding demands for registered apprentices in a far larger skilled labor force they offered little or nothing to support.

SMACNA contractors invest great amounts of resources to provide their employees with the highest quality certified training in a safe environment. This training that allows workers to not only acquire first-rate marketable skills but forges the path to a lifelong career in the construction industry. Further, we offer a leading pay and benefits package appropriate for attracting a highly skilled and trained workforce. More than of our 10,000 apprentices are registered in affiliated training facilities in the United States and Canada. The registered apprenticeship programs sponsored by SMACNA contractors and their SMART union labor counterparts, had a national and local combined training investment approaching 100

million dollars in their training programs, with more than fourteen thousand pre and indentured apprentices being trained as of the beginning in recent years. Privately funded RAPs produce most all of our skilled labor force at little, if any public support, as you know. The massive investment our firms and labor partners make each year and the facilities constructed are the gold standard across the world. We appreciate your support for these exceptional efforts.

Thank you for holding the hearing today and for your support of jointly funded and administered labor - management training programs. These successful and superior apprenticeship programs are delivered using Joint Apprenticeship Training Centers (JATCs) such as those in St. Louis with Local 36.

<https://sheetmetal36.org>

If you have any interest in a tour of our training or information on our first-rate registered apprenticeship programs, please contact me at our Capitol Hill Office.

Sincerely,

Stan Kolbe
Executive Director
Government and Political Affairs
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