



February 24, 2026

The Honorable Roger Williams
Chair
House Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nydia Velázquez
Ranking Member
House Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Velázquez and Members of the House Committee on Small Business:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 67 chapters and more than 23,000 members, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the committee's hearing, "[Career and Technical Education: Developing the Future of Main Street Success.](#)" The majority of ABC's general contractor and subcontractor members qualify as small businesses as defined by the Small Business Administration. The industry consistently has one of the highest concentrations of small business participation, and its members play an integral role in building America's infrastructure.

Small businesses are the backbone of the construction industry. In fact, 81% of all construction firms have fewer than 10 employees while 99% have fewer than 100, underscoring the dominance of small operations across the sector. These firms don't just exist in large numbers—they also drive job creation. Currently, 69% of the construction workforce is employed by companies with fewer than 100 employees, illustrating the central role that small and mid-sized businesses play in sustaining the industry's labor force.

ABC's 67 chapters educate craft, safety and management professionals using innovative and flexible learning models, such as just-in-time task training, competency-based progression and work-based learning. These talent development initiatives occur alongside ABC's more than 450 federal and state government-registered apprenticeship programs that prepare American's nationwide for safe and productive work in more than 20 occupations.

However, at current rates of participation and completion, federal and state GRAPs clearly fail to meet the construction industry's short- and long-term skilled workforce development needs at a time when the industry must attract 349,000 workers in 2026 to meet the demand for construction services.

While ABC members are deeply engaged in apprenticeship programs, training partnerships and on-the-job mentoring, we also strongly support efforts to expand accessible CTE opportunities that allow students, including non-college-bound youth, to move seamlessly from K-12 classrooms into career pathways in infrastructure, construction and the skilled trades. For example, enhanced alignment of secondary CTE programs with industry certifications, investments in modern equipment/training facilities and stronger collaboration among schools, industry and apprenticeship/employer sponsors will yield dividends in workforce readiness.

Strengthening CTE is essential to ensuring small businesses, the backbone of the construction industry, can meet the workforce demands of today and tomorrow. As the vast majority of construction firms are small employers responsible for sustaining most of the industry's jobs, policies that expand access to high-quality, industry-aligned CTE programs will directly support Main Street success.

In his own [letter to the committee](#), Kelvin Enfinger of ABC member Greenhut Construction Inc. in Pensacola, Florida, emphasized the importance of CTE programs for preparing students for high-demand careers in construction and infrastructure. “In our region, CTE programs are not an alternative to success, they are a direct pipeline to it,” Enfinger noted. “Many students who may not pursue a traditional four-year college degree can step into meaningful, well-paying careers immediately after graduation. With proper alignment, modern equipment and strong industry partnerships, CTE becomes a launchpad for entrepreneurship and small business growth.”

Brandi Faison, education director of ABC North Florida, is a former teacher with more than 20 years of experience in CTE classrooms who has seen firsthand that strong partnerships between schools and the skilled trades create sustainable pipelines that benefit both students and small businesses. “When industry professionals engage directly with students, they bring real-world expertise, mentorship and hands-on learning opportunities that connect classroom instruction to meaningful careers,” Faison said. “These partnerships expose students to high-demand career pathways, leadership development and entrepreneurship within the trades—allowing them to earn industry credentials, advance professionally and even build their own businesses. By expanding and strengthening these collaborations, and by supporting policies and investments that sustain and modernize CTE programs, we can provide students with clear, achievable pathways to success while meeting the workforce needs of Main Street America—all without placing unnecessary financial debt on the next generation.”

While ABC members continue to make substantial investments in apprenticeship and workforce development, the scale of current labor shortages requires a broader, more coordinated approach. By modernizing CTE programs, fostering stronger partnerships between educators and industry, and creating seamless pathways from classrooms to careers, Congress can help secure a skilled, safe and productive construction workforce that will build and maintain America’s infrastructure for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Government Affairs