



HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY ON H.B. 551

Provided on June 26, 2018

Chair Young, Vice Chair Riedel, and Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our association's concerns with House Bill 551 as it relates to the construction industry. My name is Andrea Ashley, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations for the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Ohio. AGC of Ohio is a commercial construction association that represents large and small, union and open shop (non-union), commercial building and industrial (vertical) contractors from across the state.

Bringing more people into the construction industry is important to members of our association, and AGC of Ohio supports encouraging youth to enter the industry. AGC of Ohio and the Ohio Contractors Association, who represents heavy and highway contractors, have recently launched a marketing initiative called I Build America - Ohio and have been working with the Ohio Dept. of Education and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation on the effort. Our members and local AGC Divisions are involved in career tech programs, preapprenticeship programs, and outreach efforts to schools; they also invest a significant amount of time and money in training and apprenticeship programs.

It is no secret that both construction and manufacturing are considered hazardous industries, and employers in both those industries invest significantly in the safety and health of its workforce. But construction is very different than manufacturing. Every day a jobsite drastically changes—as do the occupational exposures and risks, people on the jobsite, and construction activities. Construction workers' safety is dependent not only on an individual's skills and training, but also of those around them.



We appreciate Representatives Perales and Romanchuck’s desire to expose young people to the construction industry. However, our members have concerns and questions about H.B. 551 in its current form as it applies to construction. Some include:

- The overall training requirements for minors to work on an active jobsite are woefully insufficient
- The instruction language for the operation of tools is very vague and could be ripe for abuse.
- The OSHA training requirements do not adequately take into account the hazards of an active jobsite.
- The bill is silent on supervision of minors while working.
- Numerous questions exist about insurance, workers compensation coverage, liability and other risks associated with minors on active jobsites.

AGC of Ohio cannot support the H.B. 551 as currently drafted, as it could unnecessarily put minors at risk as well as others working on active construction jobsites. We urge the committee either (1) take the time to thoroughly consider the differences between the two industries and make changes to address the construction concerns; or (2) simply remove construction from the current bill and take the time to work with the interested parties to develop a more appropriate proposal for the construction industry.

AGC of Ohio has many members that hire preapprentices, career tech, and other high school students that are interested in construction. The contractors utilize the students in very controlled environments with significant oversight and more training than what is required under this bill. The students gain meaningful experience without being exposed the risks associated with an active jobsite.

Lastly, I want to reiterate that AGC of Ohio supports exposing young people to the construction industry. We stand ready to work with the bill’s sponsors, this committee and other interested parties to come up with a solution that better addresses the unique nature of the industry and ensures the safety of minors.