



To: Ohio House of Representatives – Education and Career Readiness Committee
From: Matt Szollosi/Rob Dorans
Date: March 28, 2017

Re: Proponent Testimony on H.B. 98

Chairman Brenner / Vice- Chair Slaby / Ranking Member Fedor:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of H.B 98. I offer this testimony on behalf of ACT Ohio and our more than 92,000 skilled construction professionals represented by our 137 local affiliates, and 14 regional councils. ACT Ohio is a 501(c)(5) created to encourage economic and industrial development opportunities, and to facilitate utilization of industry-best practices for Ohio's public and private construction.

As many of you know, our members have over 80 multi-million dollar, state of the art apprenticeship training centers, all 100% privately funded through employer contributions and member deductions. A recent internal survey revealed that ACT Ohio's members, the Operating Engineers, and the Carpenters union spent a total of \$48,208,317.58 on apprenticeship training in 2015.

According to a recent public records request response from the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Office of Workforce Development of the 10,550 registered construction apprentices in Ohio, 8,730 are enrolled in Building Trades affiliated apprenticeship programs. In other words, over 82% of the registered construction apprentices in Ohio are enrolled in Building Trades

affiliated programs. All of these apprentices will graduate from our programs with zero student loan debt.

The reason I cite these numbers to you today is to make it clear that ACT Ohio and its members take worker training seriously. A central tenet of our local affiliates' mission is to ensure that Ohio has a high skilled construction workforce. Our member's workforce development efforts are a key element to our state's ability to attract industrial and economic development and grow Ohio's middle class.

ACT Ohio affiliate locals are beginning to experience the first retirements of its Baby Boomer members. These members have been the backbone of our industry for decades. As these members begin to retire, our local affiliates are in the process of recruiting the next generation of skilled construction craftsmen and women.

H.B. 98 will ensure that our apprenticeship programs are welcome in school districts across Ohio. All too often in the 1990s and early 2000s school districts were hesitant to allow our apprenticeship programs into their schools to recruit students. Guidance counselors were often judged on how many students went to college, rather than how many students moved on to successful careers after graduation.

In recent years we've seen a renewed effort by many school districts to provide students with career options beyond the traditional college route. From the first day of their program, a Building Trades apprentice is paid an hourly wage, health benefits and earns a pension. In an era in which many college students are saddled with significant student loan debt, our programs offer a tuition free pathway to the middle class. H.B. 98 will ensure that our apprenticeship programs are welcome in school districts throughout Ohio. Recruiting new men and women into our industry is critical for rebuilding the state's infrastructure and Ohio's competitiveness in attracting investment.

I want to thank the sponsors of H.B 98 Rep. Mike Duffey and Rep. Kristin Boggs for their work on this legislation. Additionally, I appreciate the time and attention of this committee. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments regarding our support of this legislation.