

St. Louis - Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council



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September 25, 2018

The Honorable Sam Page
St. Louis County Council District 2
41 South Central Avenue
Clayton, MO 63105

Dear Council Member Page:

It has come to my attention that Bill 136, currently under consideration by the St. Louis County Council, eliminates language requiring contractors who bid on specified-County work to participate in a US-DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program. I respectfully ask that you read the following before supporting such a harmful measure.

As defined by the US Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven, highly customizable career skills training model – for businesses, non-profit organizations, secondary and post-secondary institutions, and government agencies – that combines structured on the job training with related classroom instruction. Participants earn a salary with scheduled wage increases during their apprenticeship and are awarded a portable credential upon completion.

Please note this is NOT a union/non-union issue. To assume ONLY union contractors are Registered Apprenticeship Program participants is blatantly inaccurate. US DOL certified apprenticeship programs are widely recognized by the construction industry, by both union and non-union contractors, as the best way to develop a qualified workforce. By generating a skilled and stable local workforce, the programs serve to strengthen our local economy.

The programs also ensure that contractors can deliver a quality product that meets the latest industry standards. Contractors who don't participate in a registered apprenticeship program cannot guarantee that St. Louis County will receive quality construction/infrastructure. Taxpayers deserve quality construction! As a construction consumer who also has a vested interest in a thriving local economy, St. Louis County should recognize the value apprenticeship programs bring to taxpayers and county government.

Contractors who don't provide the opportunity for workers to develop credentialed skills within a registered apprenticeship do a disservice to their employees. **If St. Louis County wants to generate legitimate career pathways for a greater more diverse population, the St. Louis County Council should support companies who invest in the quality training that provides stable living wages, long term career opportunities and proven pathways to upward mobility.**

As the Secretary of the largest federally-approved apprenticeship program in the state of Missouri—located in Affton, MO—I wish to convey that our industry partners invest over \$5 million per year training safe, productive, US-DOL certified construction workers. There are multiple programs in place to attract more minorities to the industry and create more opportunity for all workers.

Passage of proposed Bill 136 is certain to be detrimental to both workers and those investing in workforce development. Workforce development must be a priority for the St. Louis County Council. Instead of eliminating the apprenticeship requirement, it should be maintained and promoted as evidence of the County's commitment to creating a skilled workforce.

Sincerely,

Al Bond
Executive Secretary-Treasurer