



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 3, 2013

The Honorable Michael Dembrow, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

RE: House Bill 3245

Chair Dembrow and members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, I am Brian Belleque, Westside Institutions Administrator with the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to provide information on HB 3245 as it relates to the department.

What this Bill Does

As written, HB 3245 requires the department and Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) ensure licensed or experienced trade or occupation corrections employees supervise inmates participating as an apprentice or journeyworker in apprenticeship programs.

Background Information

Currently, the department contracts with the Treasure Valley Community College for two programs at Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI) in Ontario. Fourteen inmates currently participate in a pre-apprentice carpentry program and are supervised by two Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) approved journey level TVCC staff. We also have a cabinet-making apprenticeship program at SRCI for up to four inmates that will be supervised by TVCC staff.

In addition, DOC is working on a contract to bring the Oregon Limited Building Maintenance Electrician (ORLBME) apprenticeship program to the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) in Wilsonville. Once in place, an inmate's on-the-job training will be supervised by DOC employees and their related training through the ORLBME as required by BOLI.

Concerns with this Bill

As drafted, HB 3245 requires a DOC or OCE employee licensed or experienced in appropriate trade or occupation to supervise in an apprenticeship program like the carpentry program at SRCI and the proposed ORLBME at CCCF. This requirement would eliminate or dramatically limit the department's apprenticeship programs and future opportunities for such, thereby limiting skilled-trades opportunities for inmates.

Additional Information

DOC's 14 institutions were surveyed and those institutions that have apprenticeship programs have licensed staff directly supervise those inmates in a DOC physical plant-based apprenticeship program.

There are no DOC physical plant-based apprenticeship programs being managed in the stand-alone minimum facilities and the bill, as written, would not have any impact to those facilities. On occasion, the minimum custody institutions house an inmate with certain trade licensure. In discussions with State Building Codes Division, it is the DOC's position that an inmate possessing a certified license could perform repair and maintenance work under the Master Permit Program without being directly supervised by a DOC staff member with the same or higher level of certification. Under the Master Permit Program, the work completed by the licensed inmate would be inspected by a qualified and properly licensed individual to ensure the work was completed correctly and properly recorded. If this bill passes, the DOC would have to pursue hiring additional maintenance staff with appropriate licensure for our minimum custody facilities, or consider using outside contractors to complete the work in place of licensed inmates or DOC staff.

Submitted by:

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