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<u>**Via Email**</u>
House Committee on Business and Labor

<u>**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 4143**</u>

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4143. I am a civil rights attorney and I fight for workers that face unsafe working conditions. Through my work, I have seen first-hand how removing oversight when it comes to workplace safety and training puts workers in extreme danger. I also see that employers disproportionately subject workers of color, women, and older workers to unsafe conditions.

HB 4143 prevents the state from using taxpayer funds to support Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs). Oregon apprenticeship programs currently provide workers with rigorous workforce training that prioritizes safety and IRAPs threaten to allow the degradation of these rigorous standards. Unlike the existing model, the new IRAP system gives private organizations substantial deference with very little corresponding opportunity for accountability if IRAPs violate their own self-created standards.

The legislature should invest in expanding Oregon's existing high-quality apprenticeship programs, rather than allocate resources to a new program that risks depressing wages, creating unsafe workplaces, and producing low-quality construction. Union registered apprenticeship programs are extremely beneficial to Oregon's communities as they provide opportunities for people of color, veterans, and women to gain skills in a highly-competitive industry that offers a pathway to economic security.

To me, the choice is clear: we must pass HB 4143 to ensure that IRAPs stay out of Oregon's construction industry. We must stand up to the special interest groups and keep Oregon workers safe. I urge a "yes" vote on HB 4143.

Sincerely,
Christina Stephenson