

To whom it may concern,

My name is Larry Licato and I am the Coordinator for 71Five VoTech- Jackson County.

Working with Opportunity Youth in the Rogue Valley has been extremely rewarding as we see so many youth find a purpose and a path to follow. Many students come to us and claim to have no direction for their lives. Then after being with our program for a short time, we hear they have now found a direction with some returning to finish their high school diplomas or GED and get their driver's license.

We have a young lady that has come to Medford from another state to escape a bad domestic situation. She was introverted, hated school, hated other students, and joined us for something to do. She was recommended to us from an alternative school. Today she is an amazing welder, she is back in school, she has her driver's license and is working full time as a carhop on roller skates. The issue here is that she is 16 and working as a carhop when she could be an amazing welding fabricator. She continues to attend VoTech to keep her skills current, but she is well ahead of many welders much older.

Another story worth telling is of a young man who came out of the Juvenile Justice system and joined us to learn construction skills. He is very talented and started back to school. Once he completed our course of training, he couldn't get hired anywhere except for a fast-food company. After a short time, he quit the job, dropped out of school and is back on drugs. I believe if he had been given an opportunity to find purpose with a good company, using his skills, and mentored by good men, he would be doing much better now.

Lastly a young Latino man, a good worker got a job at Fred Meyer pushing carts. He was invited to join a pre-apprenticeship electrical CORE course and finished as a Platinum Student, first in his class. He is perfect to join the electrical apprenticeship program, but he is back at Fred Meyer waiting to come of age. To me, this is a waste of an incredible student with so much potential.

I believe this legislation to lower the age of a worker using power tools to 16 would go a long way to giving these young adults a fighting chance to succeed and be a productive citizen with hope and a future.

Thank you,



Larry A. Licato
VoTech Coordinator- Jackson County