

Submitter: Michael Alldritt
On Behalf Of: Ironworkers Local 29
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB977

March 29, 2023

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To: Chair Jama

Vice-Chair Anderson

Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development

FR: Mike Alldritt, Ironworkers Local 29

RE: Opposition to SB 977

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee, for the record my name is Mike Alldritt. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 977. The Ironworkers Local 29 represents more than 1,700 Journeyworkers and registered apprentices across Oregon and Southwest Washington. Our members are a vital part of the skilled and local workforce that we need to build crucial infrastructure across urban and rural Oregon.

Oregon's Prevailing Wage Rate Law sets the minimum wages for construction workers employed on public works projects. Research has consistently shown that the prevailing wage laws help working Oregonians earn middle-class incomes and expand the amount of workers with healthcare coverage and retirement plans. While labor costs for construction projects typically make up only 15 to 20 percent of the total project cost—a 2021 study by the University of Oregon's Labor Education Research Center found that prevailing wage laws increase worker incomes by 8 percent, expand health insurance coverage for construction workers by 9 percent, and increases the chances that in-state contractors will be awarded public projects by 12 percent.

I am proud to say that I graduated from a registered apprenticeship program in Oregon. This apprenticeship gave me the ability to earn as I learned, support my family, and most importantly to me—continue to live in rural Oregon. Creating a carveout for publicly funded housing projects is a step backwards and an attack on workers and apprenticeship. I strongly believe that the Legislature should be focusing on how it can help advance policy that creates better paying jobs for all Oregonians. SB 979 is a false choice that advances the interests of developers instead of workers.

We will not solve our housing crisis by attacking the wages of construction workers or

by reducing the amount of apprentice hours on a jobsite. As a Journeymen Ironworker and a member of Local 29, I urge you to oppose SB 977.