



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION  
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home  
Is Our  
Business*

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
Public Hearing Testimony  
March 15, 2024**

**To: Chairpersons Osten and Walker, Ranking Members Berthel and Nuccio, distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee**

**From: Jim Perras, HBRA-CT CEO**

**Regarding Proposed S.B. No. 51 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE PREAPPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM. (SUPPORT)**

The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA-CT) is a professional trade association with nearly 800 hundred business members statewide, employing tens of thousands of Connecticut residents. Our association of small businesses is comprised of residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in Connecticut each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

**The HBRA-CT thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 51 and urges its passage.** Public Act 23-167 created a funding mechanism under the State Department of Education (SDE) to provide financial assistance to schools for each student that successfully completes a pre-apprenticeship program certified for use by the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL). Unfortunately, no funds were appropriated to start the program. Senate Bill, if passed, would properly fund the Pre-Apprenticeship Grant Program for schools.

In 2022, the HBRA-CT worked in collaboration with the CT DOL to get a nationally recognized residential construction pre apprenticeship curriculum certified for use in Connecticut. It is currently being used in three Connecticut High Schools, with three more expected to utilize the program in the Fall of 2025. Students who complete this program receive 300 hours towards a certified apprentice program in a skilled trade, including; HVAC, Plumbing and Electrical making them immediately marketable to employers and setting a great foundation for a rewarding career in the trades. Passage of SB 51 will provide the funding needed to build upon this success and to grow this program in other schools.

In Governor Lamont's State of the State Address he called for bold action on housing and the need to increase housing production to meet the diverse needs of Connecticut residents and protect our most vulnerable populations experiencing housing instability

and homelessness. To meet the housing targets set by the Administration we need to immediately begin to grow skilled labor in the residential construction workforce.

Supporting this legislation has the additional benefit of helping to address low housing production numbers in the state of Connecticut, in turn helping to alleviate the housing accessibility and affordability crisis we are currently experiencing. Based on current U.S. Census data, Connecticut's housing production numbers are among the lowest in the Country (Second only to Illinois) and a contributing factor is our aging residential construction workforce which also happens to be amongst the oldest in the Country.

The Pre-Apprenticeship Grant Program is modeled after existing law in the state of Colorado titled the Career Development Incentive Program, where the strategy of assisting schools that offer pre apprenticeship programs with additional resources has been widely successful at growing the number of schools that offer these programs and the number of students who successfully complete them.<sup>1</sup> Since 2016, Colorado's program has seen over 44,000 students these valuable and marketable certificates.

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 51, the HBRA-CT respectfully urges its passage.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/hb18-1266>