



Testimony of:
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**U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and
Secondary Education**

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Chairman Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici and members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education:

Thank you for the invitation to testify this morning and for the opportunity to discuss the construction workforce and policies to expand critical career pathways for high school students across the country.

My name is Brandon Mabile, and I am a strategic development manager for Performance Contractors Inc., headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a member of Associated Builders and Contractors. Founded in 1979, Performance Contractors provides full-service construction services through all phases of the industrial construction process—from site prep through start-up. Performance serves a variety of industries—from chemical and power to automotive and refinery—with construction, turnaround and maintenance services that put safety and quality at the forefront of every project and decision. Today, I am testifying on behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction trade association with 68 chapters representing more than 22,000 members.

One of the key issues currently facing Performance and contractors throughout the construction industry is the severe workforce shortage that threatens our ability to thrive and build critical construction projects on time and on budget. To ensure the success of our business and the industry as a whole, Performance knows that we must locate, encourage and educate a new generation of skilled American workers and ensure these hardworking and determined individuals are able to participate in the American workforce and make a living right out of high school, if they so choose, at a time when they are most needed.

Part of my role at Performance Contractors has been working with high schools and school districts to provide students with important exposure to the rewarding careers

available through the skilled trades. While still facing outdated and inaccurate stigmas, a job in the skilled trades is vital work that requires a high skill level, intense focus and a healthy work ethic. In the construction industry, highly skilled craft professionals are also able to obtain high-paying, high-demand jobs that are necessary in most every community throughout the country. We work to ensure that students are aware of the opportunities available to them and the worthwhile skills education that Performance Contractors can provide them if they choose to take this career pathway.

To provide these services to our high schools, Performance Contractors has joined with contractors and construction users in the greater Houston area to support and fund the Construction and Maintenance Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 education foundation. CMEF provides education to current and aspiring craft workers both at its own facility and through partnerships with local area high schools and community colleges. CMEF sponsors 62 area high schools, giving them access to the National Center for Construction Education and Research curriculum. This includes low-cost or no-cost access to NCCER curriculum. NCCER is a widely recognized source for craft education, assessment and certification in the construction industry. Today, NCCER develops standardized curricula and industry-recognized, portable credentials for more than 70 crafts that have been used in all 50 states and in 20 countries.

Additionally, CMEF connects high schools with contractor sponsors who provide personal protective equipment, construction materials, guest speakers and mentors to the high school programs, providing vital resources and important contacts and guidance to students interested in the skilled trades. CMEF has a current operating budget of \$270,000 for its high school program, which has allowed us to serve our students. We are always looking for new partnerships and inroads to let students, teachers and parents know about these important opportunities and successful careers the skilled trades can provide.

As a member of ABC, along with its 68 chapters and its 22,000+ members, we continue to do our part to educate craft and management professionals using innovative and

flexible learning models to build a safe, skilled and productive workforce. This all-of-the-above approach to workforce development has produced a network of ABC chapters and affiliates across the country that offer more than 800 apprenticeship, craft, safety and management education programs to build the people who build America. In 2022, ABC members invested [\\$1.5 billion](#) to educate 1.3 million course attendees to build a construction workforce that is safe, skilled and productive. Additionally, a 2023 survey of ABC members indicated that 79% of ABC contractors have targeted outreach to high school students, high school graduates and individuals with GED diplomas and 65% have targeted programs to community college students and graduates. ABC members partner with and offer internships for college/university and high school students 74% and 62% respectively, and 84% of ABC contractors offer paid internships to college/university and high school students.

The construction industry must attract more than half a million additional workers on top of the normal pace of hiring in order to meet the demand for labor, according to a 2023 model developed by ABC. With nearly 1 in 4 construction workers older than 55, retirements will continue to whittle away at the construction workforce. Simply put, our industry can't afford to miss this opportunity to expand critical career pathways for the future construction workforce across the country.

I look forward to discussing this important issue with the committee today and hopefully provide insight into the successful programs we have offered and the lives we have enriched through our high school programs. Thank you.