



March 12, 2013

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national association with 72 chapters representing 22,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms, I am writing in support of the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act (H.R. 803). This legislation will strengthen our nation's workforce development system and increase employment opportunities by creating a more streamlined approach that focuses on businesses' hiring and training needs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of wage and salary jobs in the construction industry is expected to grow 19 percent through 2018, while all industries combined are expected to grow 11 percent. ABC believes one of the keys to attracting new workers and retaining current craft professionals is flexible training programs.

Specifically, H.R. 803 will enable small businesses, which create more than 65 percent of all new jobs in America, to continue developing training programs and career opportunities. By serving their communities through local workforce investment boards, which will be enhanced by this legislation, business leaders can become more involved in career development programs and serve as an authority on training, skills and job opportunities in their communities.

Additionally, this legislation will eliminate statutory language included in the Workforce Investment Act that allows green jobs training grants to be accessed only by firms associated with a labor union. Currently, contractors with employees who choose not to be associated with union training providers are effectively barred from accessing federal green jobs training dollars funded by their own taxes. This is grossly unfair to the 87 percent of employees in the construction industry who choose not to be affiliated with a labor organization.

H.R. 803 addresses much needed reform to our country's workforce training system by providing a framework that will consolidate programs and increase the role of business. We appreciate your attention to this important matter, and urge immediate passage of the SKILLS Act.

Sincerely,

Alabama Chapter

Baltimore Metro Chapter

Central Ohio Chapter

Alaska Chapter

Carolinas Chapter

Central Pennsylvania Chapter

Arizona Builders Alliance

Central California Chapter

Central Texas Chapter

Arkansas Chapter

Central Florida Chapter

Chesapeake Shores Chapter

Connecticut Chapter	Mid Gulf Coast Chapter	Texas Coastal Bend Chapter
Cornhusker Chapter	Mid Tennessee Chapter	Texas Gulf Coast Chapter
Cumberland Valley Chapter	Minnesota/North Dakota Chapter	Texas Mid-Coast Chapter
Delaware Chapter	Mississippi Chapter	TEXO Chapter
East Tennessee Chapter	Nevada Chapter	Utah Chapter
Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter	New Hampshire/Vermont Chapter	Virginia Chapter
Empire State Chapter	New Jersey Chapter	West Tennessee Chapter
Florida East Coast Chapter	New Mexico Chapter	West Virginia Chapter
Florida First Coast Chapter	New Orleans/Bayou Chapter	Western Colorado Chapter
Florida Gulf Coast Chapter	North Alabama Chapter	Western Michigan Chapter
Georgia Chapter	North Florida Chapter	Western Pennsylvania Chapter
Greater Houston Chapter	Northern California Chapter	Western Washington Chapter
Greater Michigan Chapter	Northern Ohio Chapter	Wisconsin Chapter
Guam Contractors Association	Ohio Valley Chapter	Wyoming Chapter
Hawaii Chapter	Oklahoma Chapter	
Heart of America Chapter	Pacific Northwest Chapter	
Illinois Chapter	Pelican Chapter	
Indiana Chapter	Rhode Island Chapter	
Inland Pacific Chapter	Rocky Mountain Chapter	
Iowa Chapter	San Diego Chapter	
Kentuckiana Chapter	South Texas Chapter	
Keystone Chapter	Southeast Texas Chapter	
Los Angeles-Ventura Chapter	Southeastern Michigan	
Maine Chapter	Southern California Chapter	
Massachusetts Chapter		
Metro Washington Chapter		