

TESTIMONY OF JASON WILLIAMS, 3RD YEAR APPRENTICE

SB259 / HB611, PROCUREMENT - PREVAILING WAGE - APPLICABILITY

FAVORABLE

Dear members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

My name is Jason Williams, and I am a 3rd year apprentice and proud member of UA Steamfitters Local 602.

I support this legislation because expanding prevailing wages to mechanical service work will open more doors and opportunities for people just like me.

At 29, I made some mistakes that I'm not proud of. I was sentenced to 31 years, 18.5 years suspended sentence, and ultimately incarcerated for 11 years and 8 months.

It was a long road. But looking back, I had to go to a place with no windows to get a real view on my life.

During my incarceration, I participated in a vocational welding training program, and I excelled. By chance, I was visited by a childhood friend, whose wife was a member of UA Steamfitters 602, and she suggested that I pursue a career in welding through the union, once I got out.

I immediately began practicing for the apprenticeship test. When I was released, I was blessed to be able to take the apprenticeship test, and was accepted into the Steamfitters 602 apprenticeship training program. Shortly thereafter, I got the call to begin work, which I did. That was 3 years ago.

Through my training, I've met other people who needed second chances, and transformed their lives through the apprenticeship programs. From a deeply personal point of view, this program gives me the opportunity to feel and actually be free, and to help other people understand their place in the world, and the opportunities available to them.

This legislation is critical in helping to expand programs like mine, and to expand the real-world opportunities for people like me to earn good wages for both construction and service work.

I'm telling you my story, because it relates directly to the importance of this legislation. Please do everything that you can to pass this legislation, which will help lift thousands of people into good jobs and second chances.

Thank you.