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House District 35 – West Fairbanks

HB 186

“An Act relating to the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects; and relating to a report on the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects.”

Well trained construction workers are critical to the efficient and economical completion of construction projects. Traditionally, apprenticeships programs have been an effective way to provide on-the-job training experience for the construction trade. Individuals enrolled in apprentice programs gain the training and experience necessary to advance in the construction trades. House Bill 186 seeks to help the State create and retain skilled laborers in the construction industry. The number of apprentices in Alaska has just recently surpassed the number of active apprentices from FY15, with the number of apprentices for FY25 coming out to 2,316 according to the US Department of Labor, an almost 10% increase. House Bill 186 invests in the future of our state by putting our apprentices to work.

With the future of the workforce ever-changing, apprenticeships give Alaskans the opportunity to further their education in trade skills while still earning income. In FY 25, the US Department of Labor reported that 67% of apprenticeships in Alaska were in the construction industry. 92% of apprentices who complete registered apprenticeship programs are still employed nine months later, earning an average of 80,000 dollars annually.

House Bill 186 ensures that, to the extent possible, state funded construction projects valued at 5 million dollars or more have at least 15% of the labor done by registered apprentices. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities would work in tandem with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to create a list of projects that would fall into this category. The list would include how many hours were preformed by apprentices as well as their job titles.

This is not a new concept. In 2005, Governor Frank Murkowski enacted Administrative Order 226 which created the 15% apprentice labor hour requirement for DOTPF for construction of heavy and highway construction projects. AO 226 covered only four apprentice occupations. In 2015, Governor Bill Walker revoked AO 226 and replaced it with AO 278 which expanded the scope of state construction projects to include a total of twenty-three apprentice occupations, which was later rescinded in 2019 by Governor Dunleavy with no similar policy to replace it.

Please join me in supporting apprentice labor and workforce development in Alaska’s construction sector.

My staff on this legislation is Griffen Sukkaew, please reach out to him by email, griffen.sukkaew@akleg.gov, or by phone (907) 465-1384 with any questions.

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