



**ALASKA STATE PIPE TRADES ASSOCIATION**  
UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES  
OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPEFITTING INDUSTRY  
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA  
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March 22, 2021

The Honorable Zack Fields  
Alaska State House  
State Capital Room 24  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**Re: Support for HB 132- SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS; TAX CREDITS**

Dear Representative Fields,

We wish to express our full support for HB 132, and we want to thank the House Labor & Commerce committee for its commitment to expand registered apprenticeship in Alaska. As journeyman plumbers, we know firsthand how an apprenticeship program can transform your life, and provide a meaningful career pathway with good wages and benefits to support a family. At its core, apprenticeship is driven by the need for industry to develop a skilled workforce. Through apprenticeship, Alaskans can earn wages while they learn—both on the job and through classroom instruction—and ultimately receive a valuable and portable credential. Each of our locals has a strong apprenticeship program managed by a joint labor-management committee. Apprentices spend 10,000 hours in the program, longer than most because we are committed to producing the highest quality plumbers and pipefitters in Alaska.

Apprenticeship provides solid career pathways for veterans as well. The United Association of Journeyman and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry (UA) has partnered with the U.S. Military to create the UA Veterans in Piping (VIP) program. Across the country, the VIP program is a pathway into a UA apprenticeship program which consists of 18 weeks of accelerated training. Veterans earn industry-recognized certifications and direct entry into solid, private-sector jobs with good pay and benefits.

As journeyman plumbers committed to our craft, we believe it's critical that Alaska's youth are presented with multiple career pathways in secondary school. While college is this right choice for many, it's not for everyone. By strengthening and expanding school to apprenticeship programs, we have the chance to reach many bright and capable Alaskans whose talents might otherwise be wasted in dead-end, low-paying jobs. Apprenticeship provides the structured training and on-the-job experience an individual needs to produce a skilled, highly-paid career professional.

Sincerely,

Robert Hubbard, President  
Business Manager, UA Local 375 (Fairbanks)

Aaron Plikat, Vice-President  
Business Manager, UA Local 367 (Anchorage)

Gene Bay, Secretary-Treasurer  
Business Manager, UA Local Union 262 (Juneau)

**PRESIDENT**  
Robert Hubbard

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Aaron Plikat

**SECRETARY- TREASURER**  
Gene Bay