

**House Majority Policy Committee Hearing
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Luzerne County
Rep. Tara Toohil R-116**

George Hayden Testimony

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Pennsylvania has the most restrictive and outmoded Registered Apprenticeship Law in the country

- The State Apprenticeship Council and State Apprenticeship law blocks companies from effectively training their entry level craftsmen.
- The ratios of apprentice to journeymen are the most restrictive in the nation, requiring a company to have as many as five journey level workers before they can place an apprentice into a program.
- The state apprenticeship council has regularly blocked the creation of new programs even though the Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship has approved them.
- The recent appearance of “Responsible Contractor Laws” enacted at the local level require participation in an apprenticeship program to qualify as a bidder, however most of these local ordinances also have graduation requirements that are impossible to meet aside from the largest contractors and unions.
- In 2008 the US Department of Labor issued new guidelines for the national apprenticeship system in order to make the system more open and user friendly and also to update the regulations to accommodate 21st century training techniques. They mandated that states had two years to come into compliance with the new regulations. To date, almost three years along, Pennsylvania has done nothing to comply with the new regulations.

Pennsylvania’s Prevailing Wage Law discourages companies from hiring new employees.

- Pennsylvania’s Prevailing Wage Law requires that all workers on a public works project be paid a determined hourly rate of pay set by the Secretary of Labor & Industry.
- The wages are set at the highest collective bargaining rate for the local unions representing organized employees in that craft; sometimes as high as \$75 per hour. Every worker, regardless of experience, skill or time of service must be paid the published rate. That means a new employee to the industry, with low skills and low productivity must be paid the same as a seasoned journey level craftsman.

- It is true that employers can take a credit for properly registered apprentices, however the credit is small, and since you need five journey level workers for each apprentice has virtually no effect.
- Prevailing Wage also mandates that each worker receive a benefit package payment. Most benefit packages are above \$20 per hour, exceptionally high for a good employee benefit package. Also, companies don't ever provide benefits to workers on an hourly basis.
- PA's Prevailing Wage Law has never had clear rules and definitions, making it close to impossible to know if you are paying workers properly. The state provides next to no helpful information on their website, investigators for the Bureau of Labor Law Compliance receive little to no training and enforce the law in a haphazard manner.