

2023 -- H 5936

LC002043

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RI DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING TO DEVELOP AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PLAN TO INCREASE STATEWIDE DIVERSITY AMONG WORKERS EMPLOYED ON PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS

Introduced By: Representative Enrique George Sanchez

Date Introduced: March 01, 2023

Referred To: House Labor

1 WHEREAS, Skilled trades workers are the core occupational group within the
2 construction industry. These jobs typically require considerable on-the-job training, usually in the
3 form of registered apprenticeships; and

4 WHEREAS, As an occupational group, trades workers earn some of the best wages for
5 jobs that do not require two- or four-year college degrees; and

6 WHEREAS, Diversifying the construction workforce on public works projects, subject to
7 the prevailing wage rate laws, will first and foremost require a demographic shift in new entrants
8 to the construction workforce, representing the apprentice population. The apprentice population
9 is the pipeline for journey level construction workers; and

10 WHEREAS, Public works include, "construction, reconstruction, major renovation or
11 painting that is carried on or contracted for by a public agency to serve the public interest." Many
12 of these projects, especially transportation and bridge related work, are recipients of substantial
13 federal funding; and

14 WHEREAS, The prevailing wage is a minimum wage rate that generally includes an
15 hourly contribution for the support of jointly provided labor-management apprenticeship, it
16 appears that such projects can act as an engine for diversifying the construction workforce with
17 proper oversight; and

18 WHEREAS, There is an expectation that the workforce will be a microcosm of the

1 overall labor force. Assuming the pipeline of potential and active apprentices is sufficiently
2 diverse, it becomes the responsibility of public agencies, project owners and their contractors to
3 ensure the workforce on public projects is diverse; now, therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That this House hereby requests the Department of Labor and Training to
5 develop and provide recommendations to increase statewide diversity among workers employed
6 on public works projects to include:

7 1. Recommendations for legislation or other measures that will improve diversity among
8 workers employed on public works projects;

9 2. Recommendations that would provide approximately 2.1 percent of the federal
10 highway money, available to the State, to be utilized for building diversity in heavy road and
11 highway construction to be dispersed as follows:

- 12 • Advertising for industry careers;
- 13 • Funding an Affirmative Action Taskforce;
- 14 • Funding Childcare;
- 15 • RI CTE programs especially those located in Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, and
16 Woonsocket;
- 17 • RI Women in the Trades;
- 18 • Center for Dynamic Learning;
- 19 • Youth Build;
- 20 • Amos House; and
- 21 • Building Futures; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Department of Transportation, the Rhode
24 Island Bridge and Turnpike authority, and Matthew Weldon, Director, Rhode Island Department
25 of Labor & Training.

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