

ACT 234

S.B. NO. 2980

A Bill for an Act Relating to Education.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State of Hawaii is currently experiencing an estimated \$10,000,000,000 boom in new construction that has created a critical shortage of qualified workers in the trades. Over the next several years, projections indicate that Hawaii will need between ten thousand and twenty-six thousand more construction workers to meet industry demand. Moreover, some believe the labor shortage will only become more severe nationwide as the need for skilled workers increases on the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast and in regions with housing booms. Officials at organizations representing the construction trades note that the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the industry will need to add one hundred thousand jobs each year through 2012, while also filling an additional ninety thousand openings vacated largely by retiring baby boomers.

To meet the critical labor shortfall, the State needs a multi-pronged strategy. The first part of the strategy is to develop awareness and interest in the construction industry while providing a foundational education for students. This awareness can be established through a pre-apprenticeship program. The second part of the strategy involves ensuring that a larger base of candidates can enter post-secondary professional construction training programs. This portion of the strategy can be accomplished through expansion of the State's apprenticeship training programs.

A pre-apprenticeship program is highly attractive for two reasons: First, it provides students with a head-start on two-year post-secondary degrees, while at the same time allowing them to enter a professional apprenticeship program at a more qualified skill level. A candidate who enters an apprenticeship program at a higher skill level is more likely to complete apprenticeship training, and to graduate better qualified to enter the work force.

Second, pre-apprenticeship training programs are of enormous benefit to the State by generating interest and awareness among young students who may not even have known certain career options existed. Through a pre-apprenticeship program, trade organizations bolster the notion that becoming a plumber, carpenter, or an electrician can provide students with a successful, satisfying, and lucrative career.

The construction academy was created with these goals in mind. Honolulu community college and the department of education launched the construction academy in the fall of 2005 in partnership with eight Hawaii public high schools: Kailua, Radford, Waipahu, Mililani, Kahuku, McKinley, Pearl City, and Waiialua. The program allows high school students to take classes in various construction trades at their respective high schools and, at the same time, earn credits toward an associate degree at an affiliated community college. The 2005 construction academy class was comprised of two hundred thirty-two high school students, eighteen teachers, and two traveling instructors. This first class has generated such excitement and promise on the high school campuses that the construction academy organizers hope to expand the program to include other public high schools and community colleges, particularly on the neighbor islands.

The purpose of the construction academy is to develop interest in the industry and to build a foundation of general construction skills that prepares students for more in-depth professional trades training.

At present, the apprenticeship training programs at the University of Hawaii train approximately three thousand apprentices each semester in the construction trades. An expansion of the construction academy will allow for a larger number of interested candidates to begin the process, and grow the State's apprenticeship training programs. Funding for the program and any expansion at the high school or community college level shall be appropriated through the general budgetary process. This year, an appropriation has been made to the program via House Bill No. 1900.¹

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is establish statutorily a construction academy program within the community college system of the University of Hawaii.

SECTION 2. Chapter 305, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“PART . CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY

§305- Purpose. The purpose of the construction academy is to develop student interest in the construction industry and to build a foundation for general construction skills that prepares students at the pre-apprenticeship level for more in-depth professional trades training and workforce development.

§305- Program; establishment. There is established within the community college system a construction academy pre-apprenticeship program to meet the critical shortfalls in qualified construction labor projected over the next decade.

§305- Administration. The community college system may plan and administer the construction academy under this part with the advice of the workforce development council, the department of education, and the construction industry.

§305- Annual report. The office of the vice president for community colleges shall prepare an annual report to the legislature on the status of the program. This annual report shall include data on the development of the construction academy curriculum and content, teaching standards throughout the system, and overall achievement. The annual report shall be submitted no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular legislative session.”

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.²

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

(Approved June 23, 2006.)

Notes

1. Act 160.

2. No bracketed or underscored material.