

**Comments of Senator Mike Folmer
Apprenticeship Training
Senate Labor & Industry Committee
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 22
Hearing Room #1, North Office Building, Main Capitol**

THANK YOU for the opportunity to offer comments on my legislation, SB 280 which updates the registered apprenticeship program in Pennsylvania. Before I get started, I would like to take this opportunity to thank two individuals that have been a great resource on this issue over the years – Rebecca Burns and John Judge.

With the passage of the Fitzgerald Act of 1937, the federal government established “registered apprenticeship” program. Registered Apprenticeship is a national system of paid on-the-job training, related instruction and industry specific certification. Upon successful completion of a Registered Apprenticeship, the apprentice is issued a nationally recognized; nationally portable; post-secondary credential.

In 1961, Pennsylvania passed its own Registered Apprenticeship Law mirroring the Fitzgerald Act of 1937. Passage of a state apprenticeship law gave Pennsylvania authority over registration and oversight of state apprenticeship programs. State apprenticeship programs are dually registered and recognized both statewide and nationally.

According to a federal narrative: “In the 30 years since the Department promulgated the existing standards at 29 CFR part 29 that provide for the registration of apprenticeship programs, technological advances, demographic changes, and globalization have significantly altered the context in which apprenticeship programs operate. The revision of part 29 will enable the National Apprenticeship System to keep pace with changes in the economy and corresponding workforce challenges, continue apprenticeship’s vital role in developing a skilled, competitive workforce, and further promote registered apprenticeship as an important talent development strategy offered through the public workforce investment system.”

Pennsylvania’s Apprenticeship System has historically been underutilized. Passage of SB 280 will establish and enable the promotion of Registered Apprenticeship as a viable and vital component of the State’s workforce development; workforce education; and workforce investment system.

Benefits include but are not limited to:

- Rapid response to needs of new and emerging occupations and industries.
- More standardization and industry-based credentialing for Pennsylvania’s Businesses.
- Innovative partnerships between business and industry and secondary and post-secondary education.
- Industry driven education.

- Increased interest in manufacturing and trades as occupations.
- Decrease in the skills gap.
- Increased opportunity for attaining industry-specific credentials.
- Significant impact as a drop-out prevention model.
- Alternate pathway to post-secondary education.
- Mechanism for addressing diversification, recruitment and retention of skilled workers.
- Opportunities for training, education and employment for non-traditional and hard to serve populations.
- Entry level and higher level training.
- Increased opportunities for Post-Secondary Degrees and Certifications for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this important issue.