

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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February 13, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Julie Su
Acting Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Acting Secretary Su:

On January 17, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued "National Apprenticeship System Enhancements," a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with a 60-day public comment period. The comment period is scheduled to close on March 18, 2024.

The National Apprenticeship System provides workers quality training for well-paying careers. Current regulations governing apprenticeships are overly bureaucratic and don't meet the needs of workers or employers. Unfortunately, the proposed rule adds significant new requirements to a system that is already not producing an adequate number of trained workers to address workforce shortages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the country needs 646,100 workers in skilled trades every year through 2032 – a total of 5.8 million workers.¹ Apprenticeships can be a vehicle to reskill and upskill workers, if meaningful changes are implemented.

The proposed rule contains significant changes to the existing regulations governing the National Apprenticeship System. It is critical stakeholders be given sufficient time to analyze the proposal to understand its implications on apprenticeship programs. Therefore, sixty days is an insufficient time period for stakeholders, including state workforce agencies and apprenticeship sponsors, to develop thorough and meaningful feedback on this proposal.

In order to ensure ETA receives meaningful feedback, I respectfully request an additional 30 days for stakeholder feedback on this important rulemaking. Please provide a response to this request by February 27, 2024.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

¹ *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (Sept. 6, 2023), <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/home.htm>.

Sincerely,

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D

Ranking Member

U.S. Senate Committee on Health
Education, Labor, and Pensions