

March 30, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Hon. Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133
Michael.Rodrigues@masenate.gov

Re: House 5032 – An Act Relative to Preparing Apprentices in the Commonwealth

Dear Chair Rodrigues:

As your committee considers House 5032, *An Act Relative to Preparing Apprentices in the Commonwealth*, I write to bring your attention to some unintended consequences that warrant consideration.

House 5032 expands the use of apprenticeship programs on public construction projects costing \$10 million or more. Specifically, the bill sets apprenticeship standards that increase over a four-year period. House 5032 seeks to ensure that there is a robust field of skilled employees in the construction sector. These goals are laudable.

As Inspector General, my goal is to make government work better. To that end, the OIG has discussed this topic with a variety of stakeholders at both the state and municipal level to understand the potential impacts of this legislation. Therefore, I urge you to review this bill with these matters in mind.

Existing Market and Potential Cost Increases

First, it is unknown how frequently public agencies implementing public construction projects incorporate apprenticeship opportunities. Before enacting a new mandate, the Legislature should determine whether the ratios set in House 5032 are currently being met or if they are achievable.

Additionally, I recognize that the apprenticeship requirement in House 5032 applies only for large-scale public construction projects. This eliminates some of the potential burdens that smaller projects may have encountered. It is important to consider that these high-cost projects already grapple with significant cost increases. The potential for additional labor costs should be considered.

Decreased vendor pool

Public construction laws exist to ensure that Massachusetts construction projects are high-quality and cost-effective. Open and fair competition are the foundation of these laws. The requirement to meet apprentice goals may add new burdens to contractors, who simply decline to bid on public construction projects. I encourage you to consider the potential consequences of bolstering an apprenticeship program, while potentially limiting competition.

Duplication of efforts

All state highway projects receiving federal funding are subject to the Federal Highway Administration On-the-Job Training (OJT) requirements. The OJT program requires state departments of transportation to establish apprenticeship programs for such projects. If passed into law, House 5032 may unreasonably increase the requirement for apprentices on Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) projects. I urge the Committee to consult with MassDOT to understand fully the potential ramifications of House 5032.

In closing, House 5032 establishes a special commission that is tasked with addressing some of the concerns I have discussed. It may be beneficial to have the commission complete its work before the apprenticeship standards are implemented.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to consider some unintended consequences of this bill. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Shapiro, Esq., CIG
Inspector General

cc: (via email)

Aaron Carty, General Counsel, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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