

Good Afternoon

My name is Joe DeFusco, I am president of the Connecticut Heating Cooling Contractors Association, and I also sit on the task force discussing the current apprentice hiring ratio.

In one of our early meetings we had a discussion about the pre apprentice program and it was suggested I come before the board to inform you of our concerns. I have heard from many of our members, that they get calls from vo-tech instructors asking if they would take on a student for the summer or as a part time work study employee. In most every case the contractors have said they would be happy to take the student on especially in a busy season; unfortunately many do not, the number one reason they don't is the fact that adding the pre apprentice, who is a part time or a temporary employee uses up one full time apprentice spot for their company. Contractors are unwilling to lose a fulltime apprentice spot to a part time apprentice.

One suggestion might be to allow students *in* the vo-tech system to work part time or during school breaks for an apprenticeship sponsor, without the sponsor losing a full time apprentice position. We believe this will benefit the student, by giving them job site exposure and allowing them to see if the trade they have chosen is the trade they want to pursue post graduation. An additional potential benefit is a higher apprentice completion rate since the student will, for lack of a better term "know what they are getting into" before graduation.

The benefits for the contractor include, being able to see if the student is a good fit for his company, building a pipeline of potential new technicians and hopefully new hires as they grow their business.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.