



ABC^{Western} Washington
Government Affairs
HB 2564 Testimony
January 21, 2020

Good afternoon, Chairman Sells and committee members,


I am Andy Kaplowitz, Vice President of Government Affairs for Associated Builders and Contractors of Western Washington. We have over 300 union and non-union member companies who create about 10,000 living wage jobs for Western Washington working families, and our members contribute about \$3.5B to the state's economy annually.

While we agree with the objective of ensuring all workers receive comprehensive safety training, we are opposed to bill as it currently reads

- We make safety training easy and affordable for our members regardless of size or location (take training to them if needed)
- 2019: ABC of WW invested \$126,000 in safety training, offered 193 safety classes, attended by 1,476 employees from 94 chapter members. We provided 17 OSHA classes, attended by 150 employees from 25 member companies. In 2020, ABC of WW is launching a suicide prevention awareness program along with making an Employee Assistance Program available to our members. The WW Chapter is the top-rated ABC chapter for safety with about 80% of our member companies participating in our STEP safety program.
- Average EMR for 2019: 0.842, better than average
- Top 75 contractors in our STEP Safety Program had an average incident rate of 1.2 vs. industry avg of 3.0

The logistical burden of requiring OSHA training in two separate classes versus the existing system where safety training, specific to the discipline is provided suggests a better approach can be found.

The cost is not just that of training, but the opportunity cost and inherent delays that two separate classes, offering material less specific and valuable in keeping our



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members' workforce safe will create on vital construction projects across the state, including affordable housing and shelter for those most in need.

Let's stick with a system that provides superior safety training, encourages a culture of safety from the C-suite to entry level, tailored to the specific needs of the many disciplines within the industry, rather than a cookie-cutter approach that data reflects isn't raising the safety bar elsewhere.

Finally, we're disappointed that ABC wasn't even invited to the conversation, no less provided an opportunity to preview draft legislation and weigh in. We work closely with the department and other industry associations to constantly improve safety, and our members' safety record confirms this.

Thank you for your time.