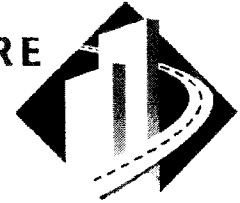




SKILLS TO BUILD AMERICA'S FUTURE



Dear Guidance Counselor:

Did you know that there are abundant job opportunities available to high school graduates – jobs that offer good pay, excellent benefits, opportunities for advancement and the satisfaction of helping build America’s future? In fact, apprentices in skilled trades could be considered being on a “construction scholarship”; i.e., they have the opportunity to “earn while they learn” the necessary skills in becoming a competent construction craft worker.

Careers in the skilled trades and design/construction management offer all of this, and more. These jobs include construction laborer, operating engineer, carpenter, iron worker, cement mason, bricklayer, truck driver and many other construction-related crafts as well as challenging management positions to oversee complex projects. High school graduates who learn a trade through an apprenticeship, trade school or community college program can expect to earn well above the median hourly wage from the very beginning of their careers, and many jobs offer generous benefits, including profit sharing, health insurance, vacation pay, and retirement savings incentives. Young men and women who decide to pursue careers in the skilled trades can earn enough to support a family, buy a home and finance a secure retirement. Those with an entrepreneurial spirit will find ample opportunities to build businesses of their own.


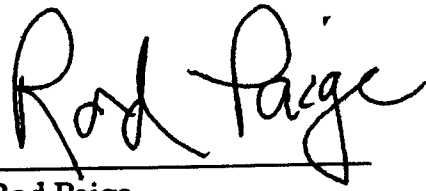
The skilled trades offer more than great jobs – they also play a key role in building America’s future. The skilled trades labor force constructs and maintains the infrastructure upon which our nation’s economic strength and potential for growth depend, and plays a critical role in upholding our nation’s security. Design and construction workers were the backbone of the recovery efforts in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Their heroic recovery and restoration work sent a clear message to the world about the depth of America’s strength, skill, character and resolve. We need only imagine the impact on the nation if there had not been enough skilled labor available to get the job done.

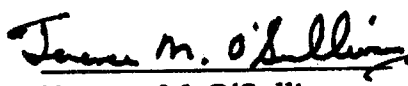
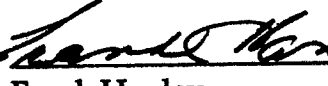
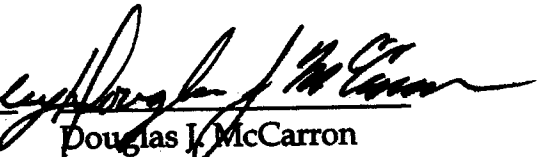
Throughout history, our nation has turned to the skilled trades labor force to give shape and structure to the American dream. Today, we need the skills and talents of a *new generation* of skilled tradesmen and women. By the year 2012, there will be a need for an additional 2.5 million people in the skilled trades, and more jobs will continue to open up as the men and women of the Baby Boom generation retire. Many national construction firms already are reporting severe shortages of skilled labor. Unless we act


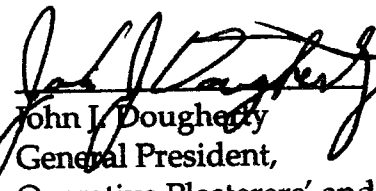

today to attract more young people to the skilled trades, America will be weaker and more vulnerable in the years ahead.

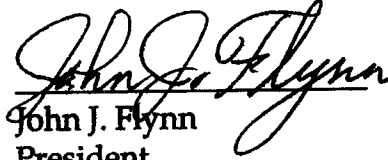
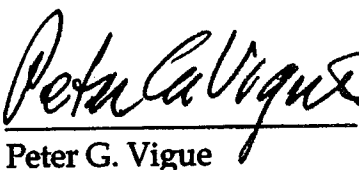
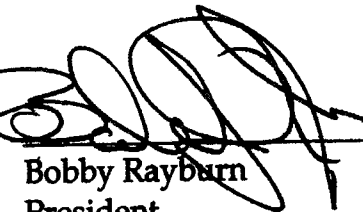
As you discuss career and education options with the students in your school, please consider encouraging them to look into a career in the skilled trades and design/construction management. Not only will a career in these fields offer them an opportunity to build a great future for themselves, it will also give them the chance to contribute to building a bright, prosperous and secure future for America.

Sincerely,

	
Elaine L. Chao Secretary U.S. Department of Labor	Rod Paige Secretary U. S. Department of Education

		
Terence M. O'Sullivan General President, Laborers' International Union of America	Frank Hanley General President, International Union of Operating Engineers	Douglas J. McCarron General President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

		
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John J. Flynn President, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers	Peter G. Vigue Chairman, Construction Industry Roundtable	Bobby Rayburn President, National Association of Home Builders

cc: Superintendents and Principals