



July 21, 2025

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6530
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: S.B.75 (Smallwood-Cuevas) – Support

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

On behalf of SHRM and the California State Council of SHRM (SHRM California), I write to express our support for SB 75, which would establish a Pre-apprenticeship Pathways to Employment Pilot Program to provide incarcerated individuals with access to high-quality pre-apprenticeship training aligned with state-registered apprenticeships in skilled construction and building trades. Providing job training to those that are nearing the end of their incarceration is critical to helping them become self-sufficient and productive members of the community as well as addressing the workforce shortages that California, and much of the nation, is facing.

SHRM is the foremost expert, researcher, advocate and thought leader on issues and innovations impacting today's evolving workplaces. With nearly 340,000 members in 180 countries, SHRM touches the lives of more than 362 million workers globally. SHRM California links all 16 of California's local SHRM chapters with SHRM's regional and national organizations and unites California's nearly 30,000 SHRM members.

A skilled workforce is a cornerstone of success in today's globalized economy, yet the U.S. labor market faces a growing skills gap. While there are more than 7.7 million open jobs, many individuals, regardless of their background, are having difficulty entering the workforce. Furthermore, [SHRM's 2024 Talent Trends](#) research shows that 75 percent of organizations have struggled to fill full-time positions in the last 12 months. Apprenticeships are a powerful solution to this challenge, with nearly 80 percent of organizations that offered registered or customized apprenticeship programs stating that these programs have been somewhat or very effective in addressing talent shortages.

SHRM's [Beneath The Surface A Unified Approach To Realizing The Value Of Untapped Talent](#) noted that according to the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, nearly 1 in 3 adults in the United States has a criminal record. Additional research found that those with criminal records had higher-than-average loyalty to their employer, lower turnover, and lower frequency of disciplinary issues, providing unique opportunities and value to organizations willing to make the effort to seek them out.



S.B.75 would help those near the end of the terms of their incarceration to enroll in pre-apprenticeship programs to learn valuable skills to meet the needs of employers, especially those in the construction and building trades. Candidates who successfully graduate from these programs are prepared for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers and become gainfully employed more quickly than others. However, many of those incarcerated are unaware of or unable to enroll in these programs, which limits their employment options upon release, resulting in greater recidivism rate for thousands of individuals convicted of a crime who go on to reoffend after their release.

SHRM and SHRM California stand ready to be a valuable resource to you and your Administration as you strive to improve workforce development initiatives. Our expertise in skills-based hiring and talent acquisition can be instrumental in shaping and implementing workforce development programs in California.

I urge the California Legislature to pass this legislation as soon as possible. If you have questions regarding SHRM and SHRM California's position on SB 75 or other policies impacting the workplace, please contact Mike Rose (mike.rose@shrm.org).

Sincerely,

Emily M. Dickens, J.D.
Chief of Staff, Head of Government Affairs,
and Corporate Secretary, SHRM