

March 29, 2022

Representative Rob Ecklund
409 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Ecklund:

I am writing to you today in support of HF3953 and SF 4285 to fund the Building Strong Communities (BSC) program. I am a single mother and was working two jobs for ten years to pay bills before I found BSC. When I learned more about BSC it sounded like a good way to get an introduction to a career working in the construction trades where I could earn a family sustaining wage.

BSC gave me an overview of what it would be like to be a construction worker, and what each of the building and construction trades do. The program was taught in the evenings so I could work and take classes at night. It taught me what it would take to be a successful tradesperson and it gave me the self-confidence knowing how the industry works. It allowed me to realize that I can overcome obstacles to do what I thought I would never be able to accomplish.

When I meet people who ask me what I do, or people who are looking to start in the trades, I always share my story of the BSC program. Graduating from the BSC program and getting a job with Lunda construction changed my life. It put me on a path to financial security and to be able to take care of my family.

BSC gives participants the tools and knowledge to successfully enter a demanding career. You aren't wondering how to get into the industry any longer – you have a foot in the door with BSC. Today, I am a successful Operating Engineer apprentice. I am proud of the work that I do, proud of how far I've come, and it is all thanks to the Building Strong Communities program.

Sincerely,

Nicole Belden