

SB 1223

Confronting Harassment in the Construction Industry

Senator Galgiani

SUMMARY

SB 1223 will bring together state agencies, a diverse set of stakeholders, labor representatives and construction industry employers to develop policies and recommend solutions aimed at eliminating incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination in the construction industry in order to provide equity and a safe working environment for all workers.

BACKGROUND

The highly skilled and trained women of the construction industry contribute greatly to California's infrastructure, economy and quality of life. They have also been critical to legislative and regulatory achievements which aim to provide safe workplaces and fair wages to all workers.

However, despite efforts to recruit women into the construction industry, women make up just 3% of the total construction workforce and only 2.4% of the apprentices enrolled in California's apprenticeship system.

According to a 2011 research report by the University of Massachusetts Boston, titled "*Unfinished Business: Building Equality for Women in the Construction Trades*" the "The building trades unions are vital to the recruitment and retention of women in the construction industry." In the unionized construction industry, wages and benefits are negotiated with employer associations and cover all workers regardless of their gender or race. These negotiations provide workers with access to quality healthcare, vacation, sick time, and pension benefits.

Efforts to recruit more women will be greatly assisted with policies that promote retention. Directly addressing the ongoing harassment and discrimination issues on the job site, will ensure all workers are treated fairly and equally and will help change the culture of the industry. Recent revelations underscore the extent to which widespread sexual harassment exists within virtually every industry. These incidents undermine the achievements towards equity.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

This bill will require the Division of Labor Standards and Enforcement to develop an industry specific harassment and discrimination prevention policy for use by employers in the construction industry.

SB 1223 establishes an advisory committee consisting of the DLSE, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, contractors, labor representatives, employers and non-profit organizations representing women to develop an industry specific anti-harassment and discrimination policy and training standard for use by construction employers. The advisory committee would provide recommendations to the Legislature for implementation.

SUPPORT

State Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO (sponsors)

CONTACT

Kaitlyn Johnson, Legislative Director
Office of Senator Galgiani: 916-651-4005
Cesar Diaz, State Building & Construction Trades Council: 916-690-5330