July 21, 2026

Commissioner Roberta Reardon
New York State Department of Labor
Building 12
W.A. Harriman Campus
Albany, NY 12226

Dear Commissioner Reardon,

We, the undersigned organizations, representing a diverse coalition of business and technology groups, write to express our strong support for reforming and modernizing New York State's apprenticeship regulations and ratios to better meet the current workforce demands.

Across New York State, apprenticeships are offering individuals pathways to meaningful careers in the skilled trades – fields that we are currently experiencing significant shortages in, particularly in Upstate communities. According to the Office of Apprenticeship out of the U.S. Department of Labor, apprentice count in New York State has increased by 790% since 2016. Unions have shown that year after year, training centers are bringing in more individuals than ever before – but we do not have the journeyworkers in place to support these growing apprentice populations.

New York State's current Apprentice Training Ratios of registered apprentices to journeyworkers are a significant limiting factor preventing further expansion of apprentice programs. When ratio schedules reach as high as 1:1, 1:5 – meaning that for any additional apprenticeships brought on after the first require an additional five journeyworkers on site – it creates an unsustainable parity. New York State is creating artificial supply limits on the amount of labor available to complete projects that are driving economic growth across our State, and artificial supply limits on the amount of high-paying careers for individuals looking for enhanced economic mobility.

New York's economic future depends on addressing this without delay. Across the state, we are witnessing a once-in-a-generation opportunity through the NY SMART I-Corridor and the significant development associated with it – from the Micron chip fabs in Clay to Reju's $390 million Textile Regeneration Hub in Rochester, to the thousands of housing units needed statewide to support a growing population and fill the roles these projects will create. There is an influx of construction and development coming to our communities, and simply not enough workers to build it.

New York’s apprenticeship shortage is placing the state at a competitive disadvantage on tax revenue, talent retention, and job creation. In peer states, including neighboring Pennsylvania, ratios are often negotiated as low as 1:1 across the skilled trades. The problem facing New York will only intensify as unions train more apprentices while experienced journeyworkers age out of the workforce. Reducing other overly burdensome requirements that discourage job sites from taking on additional apprentices would be a strong complementary reform.

To meet the moment and support New York’s economic growth goals, we urge you to align the state’s ratio’s with competitor states and current workforce demand. Our organizations are happy to be a resource and offer further insight and guidance on this issue as needed.

Sincerely,

Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Business Council of New York State
Business Council of Westchester
Capital Region Chamber of Commerce
Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce
North Country Chamber of Commerce
Upstate United

CC: Governor Kathy Hochul