



**INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD
OF ELECTRICAL
WORKERS®**

900 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.833.7000
www.ibew.org

KENNETH W. COOPER
International President

PAUL A. NOBLE
International
Secretary-Treasurer

March 20, 2024

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Support for Congressionally-Directed Spending to Facilitate
Childcare for Electrical Apprentices**

Dear Senator Patty Murray and Senator Maria Cantwell:

On behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), representing approximately 820,000 active members and retirees, I am writing to express my full support for an initiative aimed at providing essential childcare support for electrical apprentices in the state of Washington.

The IBEW stands as a beacon among unions in the AFL-CIO, distinguishing itself as one of the largest unions with members in numerous skilled occupations, both in the United States and Canada. IBEW members work tirelessly across a wide range of sectors, including utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, manufacturing, railroads, and government, contributing to the backbone of our nation's infrastructure and economy.

The initiative is spearheaded by Barry Blackburn, Training Director of the Southwest Washington Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC), and Tim O'Donnell, IBEW Local Union 76 Business Manager, and underscores a pressing need within the electrical construction industry to recruit and train highly-skilled electricians. Jointly sponsored by the IBEW Local Unions and National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), the JATCs in Washington State have a long and successful history of training individuals for rewarding careers in the electrical field. This initiative will benefit apprentices at Northwest Washington Electrical Industry JATC, Southwest Washington Electrical JATC, Inland Empire Electrical Apprenticeship JATC, and Puget Sound Electrical JATC.

The IBEW takes pride in its rich history of creating good, middle-class union jobs for Americans from all walks of life. However, aspiring electricians, and particularly those from underrepresented communities, can face significant challenges to entering the trade. The high cost of childcare represents a substantial barrier to enrollment and retention in apprenticeship programs, denying many talented individuals the opportunity to pursue careers in the industry.



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Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell
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This barrier can be removed by providing targeted financial assistance in the form of childcare stipends, which will ensure that all aspiring electricians, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have equal access to the opportunities afforded by the electrical apprenticeship program. Moreover, investments in workforce training not only benefit the individual but also their families and the broader community by fostering economic stability and growth.

The IBEW urges you to request congressionally-directed spending for childcare support for electrical apprentices in Washington for Fiscal Year 2025. Your leadership on this issue is crucial to ensuring the continued growth and success of the electrical construction industry. I stand ready to collaborate with you and your esteemed colleagues to advance this vital initiative and create a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to ensuring every community has access to good, middle-class, union jobs. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to work together to enhance the opportunities for apprentices and contribute to the continued growth and success of the economy.

If you have any questions, please contact IBEW International Representative Jeremy Ross at (202) 728-6046 or by email at Jeremy.Ross@ibew.org.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth W. Cooper".

Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

KWC:bag