

# St. Louis County Council

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The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by bipartisan majorities in Congress and signed by President Biden will provide the state of Missouri with billions of federal dollars to invest in our roads, bridges, public transportation, broadband infrastructure and more. St. Louis County is the largest county in Missouri and this investment presents a once in a generation opportunity for the people of St. Louis County to enter into the skilled construction trades which provide good-paying careers with top-tier benefits. This legislation will usher in a new generation of working-class women and men into the aging construction industry.

The time is now to ensure that those workers look like the community we represent in St. Louis County. This federal investment will provide career opportunities for underserved communities that haven't had their fair share of construction work. Programs such Building Union Diversity (B.U.D.) provide entry for minorities, women and other individuals in underserved communities to enter into apprenticeship programs in the construction industry. 82% of those that graduate from the B.U.D. program are employed in the construction trades and almost all stay long-term.

Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven training programs that provide graduates with nationally recognized, portable training credentials, and 94% of those apprentices who complete an apprenticeship program retain employment in the industry with an average salary of \$70,000. That is the type of forward-thinking workforce development St. Louis County needs, and St. Louis County Bill 8 says that St. Louis County is ready to use its spending power to invest in contractors that invest in their workers.

Just like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed on a bipartisan vote, so too was Bill 8, and it nearly passed unanimously, with only one no vote. This proves that although the council doesn't always agree, we know that Bill 8 is an investment in our St. Louis County workforce.

St. Louis County taxpayers can be assured through this piece of legislation that they are getting the highest value for their dollar. Worksites with apprenticeship trained workers see fewer on-the-job fatalities, projects are more likely to be performed ahead or on schedule, the projects are more likely to be performed the right way, the first time. All of which reduces costs while we are investing in a stronger working class. Bill 8 is an investment in our skilled construction trades workforce, their apprenticeship programs, and our communities.

It is our responsibility to do better for our communities and Bill 8 does that. Bill 8 is a win for workers and our communities.