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Baker-Polito's Career Technology Initiative to train 20,000 over four years - by Joseph Camilo

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Much has changed for the Massachusetts construction industry over the past decade, and I'm happy to report that most of the change has been for the better.

The latest and one of the most important examples came in January when the Baker-Polito administration announced its Career Technical Initiative, which will train an additional 20,000 skilled trade workers over the next four years and help close the skills gap, which has become the top priority for both ABC and the construction industry as a whole.

The initiative calls for vocational-technical schools to operate three teaching shifts per day. Vocational students will take classes from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, students from area high schools will take classes from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, and 5:00 to 9:00 pm will be reserved for training adults.

The initiative will:

- Provide adults with assistance to pay for their training
- Boost business involvement in program development and credentials
- Reduce licensure barriers to provide incentives for mid-career professionals to become vocational teachers.

Of the expected 20,000 new skilled trade workers over four years, the administration projects there will be 7,500 to 10,000 additional students enrolling in vocational and trade programs, and 9,000 to 13,000 adult learners who will earn industry credentials that will open up career opportunities for them while filling the skills gap. The governor included \$15 million to launch the proposal in his recent budget proposal.

I'm happy to note ABC's involvement in this initiative. We were invited to its unveiling at Greater Lawrence Technical School. And talk about positive change over the last decade, Jim Alibrandi of Interstate Electrical Services Corp. and I were even quoted in the administration's press release announcing the initiative – quite a change from eight years of being completely shut out by the previous administration.

The Baker administration's Career Technical Initiative can be a game changer for our industry and your business. Please call your legislators and urge them to support the \$15 million governor Baker has proposed to launch it.

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