

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
DIVISION OF APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS
1515 Clay Street, Suite 301
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (415) 703-4920
Fax: (510) 286-1448



Equal Opportunity in Apprenticeship Committee Minutes

Chairperson Susan Anderson

Monterey Tides
Wednesday, April 24, 2019
2:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Commissioner Susan Anderson called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

Members present: Susan Anderson, Nick Esquivel, Larry Hopkins, Richard Harris, Yvonne de la Peña, Frank Quintero, Frank Schetter, Christopher Christophersen, Jack Buckhorn, and DAS Chief Eric Rood

Members absent: Jim Hussey

II. Review/approve Minutes

III. *Don't let the #MeToo move-in on "You" or your "Organization"*-

Nettie Dokes, Consultant, Workforce-Alchemist

Commissioner Susan Anderson gave an introduction. Nettie Dokes, was the first African American woman in the country to become a journey level Electric Lineman. Before that, she was a lab manager with a degree in laboratory technology. She had a 4-year challenging apprenticeship program and become one of the few woman to become a lineman. 1 out of 100 lineman are woman. She has a bachelor's degree in applied science and a Master's degree in Public Administration.

A slideshow presentation was given by Nettie Dokes.

She stated that this presentation is about workers safety and job site working conditions. It is our responsibility as employers; labor, nonprofit and other partners within the apprenticeship community to make sure our worksites are safe and our work practices create healthy conditions. There are many contributing factors that lead to unsafe working conditions. How an individual thinks and feels affects their behavior. Cultural norms and economic conditions contribute to how receptive our industry is to change. She stated that Harassment and abusive conduct is a safety issue that she likes to call MeToo plus. Only by viewing it in that context, can we transform our construction culture and improve workers safety. She stated that the plus is about abusive conduct, which also negatively affects safety and working conditions for all.

She stated that MeToo is a code word for sexual harassment, sexual assault and violence against women.

The phrase Sexual harassment is only 44 years old but violence against women is old as recorded history.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the nation's premier civil rights legislation. The Act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, required equal access to public places and employment, and enforced desegregation of schools and the right to vote.

She discussed the types of harassment.

She discussed how three court decisions confirmed that women could sue their employers for harassment under title 7. However, laws do not change behavior. OSHA has many safety rules however accidents continue to happen. In order to make lasting change to the economic and social structure of our culture it is necessary for common people to gather their voices in unison. No single person is strong enough to transform a system that does not benefit the whole.

She discussed the 'me too.' movement which was founded in 2006 to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing.

In less than six months, because of the viral #metoo hashtag, a vital conversation about sexual violence has been thrust into the national dialogue.

Why is MeToo important to us?

Sexual discrimination, anti-women's attitudes and abusive conduct is prevalent on job sites despite the fact that discrimination is illegal. A hostile work environment presents safety and health concerns on several levels. Harassment can lead to increased risk of workplace accidents by leaving women distracted while working, for example working as the only female on a job site can expose or both to stress and fear assault. Especially when the working conditions include sexually explicit images, abusive conduct, intimidation and poor sanitation. Many female construction workers say that they are reluctant to report workplace safety and health problems for fear of being tagged as complainers or whiners. Which would further strain their workplace relationship and jeopardize their employment.

In addition, the apprenticeship community and the building trades have long been working on attracting and represented groups to the trades. However, culture and generational changes in attitudes and behaviors are slow. AFL secretary Liz Shuler stated that unions have an important role to play in ending sexual harassment because fighting for dignity and respect is the job fundamental to the work we do in the labor movement. However, in 2013 in a study 3 in 10 women stated women in construction reported experience sexual harassment daily and/or frequently. Negative affects to harassment range from mental and physical health challenges, reduced opportunities for OJT learning and advancement. Abandonment of good paying careers, force job changes and unemployment. For companies workplace harassment can result in substantial cost including legal, cost related to employment turnover, costs related to low productivity, increased absences and absenteeism, low motivation and/or commitment, Team destruction.

She stated by transforming how each of us reinforces MeToo plus prevention on our job sites. We can change the working conditions for all.

Comments from the apprenticeship community were made.

IV. Discussions

V. Other Items of Interest

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.