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GST Michigan Works! Workforce Program at Risk

Flint, Mich. — GST Michigan Works! today expressed strong concern regarding the Michigan House of Representatives' FY26 budget, passed Tuesday, which includes deep cuts to workforce development funding.

Key programs—including the state's flagship Going PRO Talent Fund, Registered Apprenticeships, Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG), and Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES)—are eliminated under the plan.

"These programs are vital for connecting our residents to good-paying jobs while ensuring employers have the talent they need to grow and thrive," said Jody Kerbyson, Chief Executive Officer. "Since its inception in 2014, there have been 8,000 awards, with the average award being $36,209 or $1,287 per person. In addition, 90 percent of Going PRO awards have gone to small businesses, and workers trained through the program have seen an average nine percent wage increase. Eliminating these resources would devastate both job seekers and local employers at a time when they need it most."

In GST Michigan Works!' six-county region, grant funding supported training for 1,777 new hires, many from specialty populations such as older workers, justice-involved individuals, veterans, active military reservists, individuals with disabilities, public assistance recipients, and adults who earned a High School Diploma/GED while also gaining valuable work-based skills.

Michigan's Going PRO effort, now a national model, has received strong bipartisan support since its introduction in 2013 (the initiative was previously known as the Skilled Trades Training Fund).

Michigan is currently #4 in the nation in active Registered Apprentices, with graduates earning a median salary of $80,000 one year after program completion. Without continued state investment, Michigan risks losing this momentum and the economic benefits that come with it.

GST Michigan Works! urges lawmakers to restore critical workforce funding in the negotiated FY26 budget to ensure communities like ours continue to grow and thrive.

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