April 15, 2014

The Honorable Cory Booker  
United States Senate  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tim Scott  
United States Senate  
167 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Booker and Scott:

On behalf of the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC), a national trade association composed of 55 chapters with nearly 3,000 members, I am writing in strong support of S. 2234, the “Leveraging and Energizing America’s Apprenticeship Programs (LEAP) Act,” as part of a much-needed effort to address the growing shortage of workers for highly skilled jobs in our nation’s construction sector.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has projected there will be a 23 percent growth rate in job opportunities in the electrical industry between 2010 and 2020. However, the current workforce is reaching retirement age and many electricians left the industry during the recent recession. At the same time, employers are having difficulty finding qualified individuals to fill those vacant positions. As a result, our industry’s growing skilled worker shortage may rise to a deficit of over 150,000 by the year 2020. To combat this growing skills gap, it is integral to support the expansion of apprenticeship which is critical to skilled trades such as electrical contracting.

The bipartisan LEAP Act will help build the electrical industry’s workforce by incentivizing employers to hire apprentices registered with the U.S. Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency through the creation of a Federal tax credit that would be offset by savings from reducing redundant and costly Federal printing. Employers will be eligible to receive a $1,500 credit for each new apprentice hired under the age of 25 and $1,000 for those older than 25. By offering a credit for both younger and older apprentices alike, the bill recognizes the importance of both attracting youth to high-growth fields like electrical contracting and also creating opportunities for those looking to re-enter the workforce or take a new direction with their career.

Significantly, the savings created by this important tax credit will allow IEC’s member companies to direct more capital towards growing their businesses and hiring more workers and apprentices.
The LEAP Act creates the opportunity for greater investment between the public and private sectors in building the skilled workforce our industry needs. IEC commends and thanks you for your leadership on this issue and for introducing this important bipartisan legislation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Alexis Moch
Vice President, Government Affairs
Independent Electrical Contractors