

Substitute for House Resolution No. 95.

A resolution to declare May 14-20, 2017, as Women in the Professional Trades Week in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, A professional trades worker refers to individuals who specialize in particular occupations that require either work experience, on-the-job training, or formal vocational education; and

Whereas, Historically, positions in the professional trades sector were traditionally held by men. However, today women are employed in the trades in higher numbers than ever before. They are carpenters, electricians, glaziers, ironworkers, laborers, operating engineers, plumbers, pipefitters, masons, surveyors, sheet metal workers, truck drivers, and others, acting together to create fair and safe conditions for women working in the professional trades; and

Whereas, Because of the demands of the labor market, women with professional trades training have a great opportunity to flourish in the industry and are a highly sought after resource. Nationally in 2010, only 9 percent of construction jobs were held by women, even though women held 47 percent of jobs overall. The number of professional trade level jobs in Michigan is expected to grow by 15,000 annually through the year 2024, providing a great opportunity in our state for skilled women to pursue great careers; and

Whereas, Women working in the professional trades is not a new idea to our economy. During World War I and World War II, the labor efforts of women in America were crucial to keeping the country moving forward while our men fought on distant shores. The women in the labor market of that day were critical in closing the labor shortage, with the image of “Rosie the Riveter” becoming one of the most iconic symbols of American wartime optimism; and

Whereas, In today’s professional trades industry, both men and women are equally valued to fill open positions. Women pursuing careers in the trades could deeply appreciate the encouragement from legislators as they continue to pursue opportunities in the professional trades. Now, after much progress, there are programs specifically designed to attract women into these in-demand careers; and

Whereas, The reality of today’s job market makes it difficult to earn a living wage without a college degree. However, individuals who choose to enter into a professional trades apprentice program can start out earning \$40,000 or more yearly without a college degree depending on which career path they choose to pursue, and up to a six-figure income for experienced tradeswomen. Women can also stand to make more money in professional trade arena as opposed to traditionally women dominated fields. This opportunity, along with the chance to graduate from a professional trades program without educational debt and valuable work experience, is an attractive option for future employees or business owners; and

Whereas, Nationally women now represent 8.9% of the construction workforce in the United States and businesses are recognizing and valuing the contributions women make to this industry. In the last 30 years, the number of women in the construction industry has grown by more than 80%. Therefore, more women are recognizing the professional trades as a viable career option, where they can build a thriving high paying career, with low and affordable educational expenses and a path to future success, while providing economic security for their household; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare May 14-20, 2017, as Women in the Professional Trades Week in the state of Michigan.