



## Air Conditioning Contractors of America

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November 23, 2015

Mr. Donald Trump  
Donald J. Trump for President  
725 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10022-2519

Dear Mr. Trump:

The media discussion about welders and philosophers following the November 10<sup>th</sup> Republican Presidential debate ignored the point being made that this country desperately needs skilled workers in the construction trades yet we fall short in encouraging students down this rewarding career path. I could not agree more with Senator Rubio's comments that we need to "make higher education faster and easier to access, especially vocational training. For the life of me I don't know why we stigmatize vocational education."

Just like welders, there's a shortage of skilled technicians who can install, repair, and service the next generation of energy efficient heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration equipment that will help homes and commercial buildings use less energy and provide improved indoor comfort.

Four years ago I testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee that the culture and attitude about higher education in this country needs to change (enclosed). While many HVACR contracting businesses are owned and managed by individuals with some level of higher education, more HVACR business owners choose a different path to success. In a survey conducted last year, we found that 64% of ACCA's members never attended a traditional four year college. Forty percent of our members starting out as tradesmen gaining technical skills, then made the entrepreneurial jump to opening their own shops and learning the business skills on the fly.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there are currently 267,600 HVACR mechanics and installers in the U.S. A new study estimates 115,000 new HVACR workers must be trained by 2022 to meet the anticipated demand. HVACR jobs will remain strong opportunities for workers with appropriate skills, training, certifications or work experience. In 2014, 70 percent of HVACR job postings were for middle-skill occupations that offered advertised average salaries of \$49,259 that can go higher with signing bonuses and opportunities for promotion. HVACR jobs are stable, with year-round employment that cannot be offshored, and provide strong living-wage salaries. And HVACR jobs are in demand across all states and across many occupation families. As a result, workers with HVACR skills have the opportunity to move and find work in the industry

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Unfortunately, the disconnect between education and opportunity in the HVACR industry remains, and it's a missed opportunity for workers and the economy. In 2015, the HVACR Workforce Development Foundation commissioned three reports asking "What is the cause of the talent gap and what can we do to close it?" To help answer these questions, the Foundation commissioned three studies to explore workforce supply and demand in the United States and Canada. The goal was to understand the opportunities available for HVACR workers and address the unique issues constraining the pipeline of talent for HVACR roles. Despite the fact that HVACR jobs are available and they are everywhere, provide good salaries for a good quality of life, and are available for a diverse level of skill sets, our industry is training enough students and recruitment remains a struggle.

I have attached for your review the executive summary of the HVACR Workforce Development Foundation's report, *The HVACR Workforce: Demand Heats up as Supply Melts Away: A projection of the coming shortfall of HVACR Workers and how to fix it*. I think you will find that there are tremendous opportunities in the HVACR industry for motivated, hardworking individuals looking for a career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul T. Stalknecht". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Stalknecht  
President & CEO

Enclosures