



**Commissioner Brad Avakian**  
Bureau of Labor & Industries

## **Press Release**

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### **Avakian Calls Girls Construction Camp “Invaluable” to Workforce**

*Week-long camps hosted by Oregon Tradeswomen empower 95 local girls this summer*

**PORTLAND-**As they wrapped up a week of learning about construction careers in the construction industry and some basic skills used in these trades, 40 middle school-age girls from the Metro Area received a visit from one of Oregon’s workforce development leaders: Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, who runs the state Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) and heads the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council. The BOLI-ODOT Highway Workforce Development Program has contracted for two such camps over the next two years to raise awareness and promote opportunities for young women to access the living wage career path of a skilled trades worker. Non-profit Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI), runs four “Building Girls Summer Camps” each year.

“Programs like those offered by OTI are invaluable to our state’s workforce,” Avakian told the girls, their parents and OTI staff. “Oregon needs to do two things immediately: create more opportunities for young people to get hands-on training and job skills so they’re ready for the workforce sooner, and end wage discrimination to make equal pay for equal work a reality in Oregon. By bringing more young women into the living wage jobs of the construction trades, working on our economically vital highways and bridges, OTI is with me on the front line for both priorities.”

The Building Girls Summer Construction Camp is a day camp for middle and high school girls to learn construction basics in a fun environment. Girls learn basic math and measurement, construction basics (such as measuring wood, using a skill saw, and hammering nails), how to safely and properly use hand and power tools, and other building skills. The week of camp includes visits to construction sites, teamwork, and project planning and culminates in a cooperative building project. This summer, the girls have built a playhouse structure which is being donated to the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO).

“With the addition of the BOLI-ODOT contract, we have 95 middle- and high-school girls participating in our construction camps this year,” said Connie Ashbrook, Executive Director of OTI. “Commissioner Avakian’s emphasis on job skills training for all young Oregonians is a great support for our mission.”

Visit [www.oregon.gov/BOLI](http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI) for more information about all of BOLI’s work to promote employment opportunities throughout Oregon.

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