

Associated Builders and Contractors: Corporate Front Group Undermining Taxpayers, Communities and Hard Work

Associated Builders and Contractors, also known as ABC, is a corporate front group seeking to increase its own members' wealth at the expense of taxpayers, communities, honest businesses and hard working men and women. A fringe organization, ABC falsely claims to be the voice of the construction industry even though in most states, less than one-half of 1 percent of contractors join the organization.

ABC undermines hard work by attacking workers' fundamental right to collectively bargain for fair wages and benefits. The businesses behind ABC want to drive down wages, benefits and living standards to boost profits and weaken working families.

- ABC was created for the sole purpose of taking power away from construction workers and their unions and putting it into the hands of unscrupulous contractors who don't respect the rights and voices of workers and want to take away their freedom to collectively bargain.
- The chief goal of ABC members is to keep wages and benefits as low as possible. When ABC gets its way, the result is construction jobs that drive down wages and weaken health care and retirement security.
- ABC's agenda especially undermines the hard work of women and minorities. The group has opposed common-sense legislation like the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and wants to ban project labor agreements that encourage hiring a representative, local workforce.

When ABC wins, taxpayers lose. Its efforts to eliminate community-supporting project labor agreements and gut prevailing wage laws are designed to funnel taxpayer dollars into the pockets of contractors at the expense of quality work, taxpayers and workers.

- Project labor agreements help keep major construction projects on time and on budget. They ensure projects are completed by trained and experienced workers employed by contractors who compete based on the quality of their work.
- ABC opposes these agreements because its members compete by using cheap labor and shortcuts when it comes to supplies, safety and training.
- ABC has mounted a national, coordinated attack on PLAs and prevailing wages, which have an 80-year legacy of helping to ensure that government projects create good jobs and stabilize local economies.

ABC's agenda seeks to deprive communities of any short-term or long-term benefits from large construction projects, all so its members can boost their profits.

- The PLAs that ABC opposes are designed to make sure local jobs open doors to opportunity for local workers.
- When ABC contractors bring in out-of-state workers, their wages don't stay in the community – instead of spending at local businesses, most of their pay is sent home.
- A large construction project, done right, means the community benefits in the long-term from having a trained, experienced pool of workers for future projects. ABC's approach deprives communities of the long-term benefit of a trained, local workforce.
- ABC even puts profits over the health of children and the elderly – the group is on record opposing efforts to reduce lead dust in elder housing and child care facilities.

For ABC members, the health, safety and welfare of its workers isn't a priority – they see any attempt to improve the lives of workers as an attack on their profits.

- ABC has opposed efforts by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration to add dangerous musculoskeletal disorders to the list of workplace injuries and illnesses it requires employers to track.
- ABC has opposed an effort by the White House to ensure that workers on some projects be given a chance to keep their job when a change in contractors occurs.

Despite appearances, ABC is not the business coalition it pretends to be. It is a political, special interest organization with a partisan agenda.

- Even though members of both political parties support the creation of new construction jobs – a move that would benefit ABC members – the organization donates almost exclusively to Republican candidates.
- In the 2010 election cycle, ABC contributed money to 239 U.S. House candidates. In the 2008 and 2010 cycles, it donated to 49 U.S. Senate candidates. All but two were Republicans.
- ABC is also a strong backer of Tea Party Republicans – nearly 40 percent of ABC's recent federal contributions went to candidates identified with the Tea Party movement.
- About half of ABC members are not even in the construction industry and use the group as a front for pushing a partisan agenda that doesn't respect workers' fundamental rights.
- ABC is essentially a fringe political organization that is unrepresentative of contractors. In California, for example, only .3 percent of the state's contractors are ABC members.