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ABC-Mass. chairman's message: A November to remember

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If you haven't watched TV lately, consider yourself lucky. We are being assaulted by campaign commercials that tell us how wonderful a candidate is, often followed by another ad tearing that same candidate down. After months of plodding along below the radar, campaign season is in full swing and the homestretch is upon us.

One of the most closely watched gubernatorial races in the country is right here in Massachusetts. Incumbent governor Deval Patrick is battling for his political life as Charlie Baker, and to a lesser degree Tim Cahill, mount a strong challenge.

At its September meeting, the ABC board of directors unanimously voted to endorse Charlie Baker's gubernatorial candidacy. For our association, the choice was an easy one. Charlie Baker is the only candidate in the race who has taken a clear, decisive stand on what Mass. needs to get its economy back on track. Baker's approach is refreshing. He understands the need to get Beacon Hill out of the way and let the entrepreneurs and capitalists get our economy going again.

Baker's recipe calls for an end to onerous and excessive mandates and regulatory policies that put Massachusetts businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Financially, Baker's "5-5-5" plan would set our state's sales, income, and corporate tax rates at a predictable and affordable level. Most importantly, however, is Baker's commitment to bring free enterprise, a level playing field, and open competitive bidding back to Massachusetts. As testament to this, Baker included an Executive Order banning project labor agreements (PLAs) among the first five things he would do as governor. After having watched governor Patrick exclude the open shop from \$750 million worth of new construction at UMass Boston, fairness and equity in the public construction market are needed now more than ever.

The amount of construction that's underway is the best barometer of how the economy is doing. By this measure, the Patrick administration has failed to get the Massachusetts economy moving, despite an influx of federal stimulus funds. It is time for new ideas from someone with a track record of success, and an environment in which people and companies are judged by the quality of their work, not labor affiliation.

In other races, the ABC board of directors is endorsing Mary Connaughton in the race for state auditor. Among the many reasons for this endorsement, the board cited Connaughton's proposed initiatives as deciding factors:

- 1) Perform independent financial assessment of major legislation
- 2) Audit the State Legislature
- 3) Enhance technology to promote efficiency and transparency
- 4) Perform overall risk assessment of state government and foster accountability

Unlike her opponent, former Patrick administration Labor Secretary Suzanne Bump, Connaughton is a professional auditor and Certified Public Accountant by trade. ABC believes this experience will

ensure that Connaughton will live up to her slogan of "professional, not political."

Not only do I hope that you exercise your civic duty to vote this November, but I also hope you fairly scrutinize both challengers and incumbents alike. Do they share your values? Does their record reflect their rhetoric? Across the country, voters are telling members of both parties that the status quo is no longer acceptable. Here in Massachusetts, I hope you will not squander this unique opportunity to advance our core values and remind those in power who they work for. It's time for some politicians to experience what so many in the construction industry have endured for too long: unemployment.

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