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ABC Chairman's message: Legislative team delivers!

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The July 31st end of the state legislative session is a perfect opportunity for construction unions. With few people paying attention, they can use their army of lobbyists to wreak havoc with the flood of last-minute bills being pushed through the system.

But I'm happy to report that it didn't happen that way this year. Our small but nimble legislative team, led by lobbyist John Bartley, Esq., president Greg Beeman and Chuck Borstel, fended off union efforts to do mischief and made progress on important ABC Mass. Chapter (ABCMA) priorities.

By meeting with Senate Ways and Means Committee staff, our team was able to insert language into a process piping licensing bill that provided a grandfathering provision. The amended bill was signed into law on August 8th.

A bill allowing employer payments to bona fide apprenticeship programs in the calculation of wages for determining compliance with minimum wage laws came out of the Health Care Finance Committee on July 19th with an amendment that would only make the bill apply to apprentice programs that were pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. But by the time the bill was placed on the House calendar for July 24th, ABCMA had already interceded with its main sponsor, Republican leadership and the Building Trades. The result was an agreement that no language would be adopted until ABC and the Building Trades could come to agreement over a compromise.

With job creation a top priority during the recently completed legislative session, House speaker Robert DeLeo included language to create a middle-skills subcommittee in a House jobs bill. The original language included designees from the business community, higher education, the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development and the AFL-CIO, but not the merit shop. Thanks to our team's work with a House committee chair, language was added to the bill that doesn't add ABCMA by name, but we are the only organization that fits the description used. The bill was signed into law on August 7th.

ABCMA may not be able to match the union army of lobbyists, but we have a smart, hard-working legislative team that makes our case in a highly professional manner. And in an environment in which union wishes are no longer legislators' commands, the team has again delivered for the open shop.

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