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Membership brings with it more benefits than ever

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The calendar may say the year begins in January, but for many of us September feels more like a new beginning. The kids are back at school and many of us return from hard-earned vacations with a renewed focus on our businesses.

Perhaps some of the colleagues, subcontractors and other business associates you're getting reacquainted with have previously expressed an interest in joining ABC. They may have forgotten about it during the summer slowdown, but we hope you won't.

ABC membership brings with it more benefits than ever. Our new state-approved Merit Apprenticeship program allows member companies to compete on an even playing field for public jobs. As always, the fully accredited Gould Construction Institute offers your employees the kind of high-quality, reasonably priced training that gives you a competitive edge.

Increasing membership has also never been more important than it is right now because the open shop is under siege and must maximize its political clout. Professor Elizabeth Warren, who is challenging senator Scott Brown, has a seemingly inexhaustible supply of union money. At the Greater Boston Labor Council breakfast, she declared her support for President Obama's anti-business appointees to the national Labor Relations Board who, as National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation president Mark Mix recently wrote in the Boston Herald, support "expanding [labor's] already extensive special privileges."

Few of those privileges are more blatant than union-only project labor agreements, which lock the vast majority of construction workers who choose not to join a union out of public construction projects. As President Obama campaigns for re-election against former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, we should remember that one of the first things Obama did upon taking office was to sign an executive order encouraging the use of PLA's on federally funded projects.

With the hiring of new membership director Ken Ledwak, who started September 20, we at Associated Builders and Contractors are more than ready to support your efforts. As you renew your focus on business this fall, we hope you will remember just how important it is for the open shop's voice to be heard. The stakes have never been higher.

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