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Chairman's message: The Market Basket story

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The story has been front-page news all summer. One faction executes a hostile takeover of a non-union company and the employees rise up, risking their livelihoods to return the loyalty their former CEO has always shown them.

The media and the public find the Market Basket story irresistible, but we know it isn't unique. ABC member companies and their employees have long shared that kind of loyalty. But it sure is nice for the public to learn that those kinds of employment relationships still exist in an increasingly cynical world.

The Market Basket example couldn't come at a better time for ABC. Increasing public awareness of the bonds between non-union companies and their employees will only accelerate the momentum we're already gaining among elected officials. The two-year legislative session that recently ended was among the most successful we've ever had. In addition to defeating or amending bills that would have been harmful to the open shop and the industry as a whole, we also took a more pro-active role.

After more than a two-year battle, we were able to prevail in securing a grandfathering provision for those seeking a process piping license. The amendment signed into law by Gov. Patrick as part of the 2015 budget follows a bill that made process piping a licensed trade and restored the legislative intent that a grandfathering provision be included.

Process piping was just one of the issues on which ABC exercised the growing respect it has earned by organizing and leading a coalition of industry and outside groups to advocate for our position. We used a similar strategy to amend portions of an Unemployment Insurance reform bill that would have been devastating to construction employers.

Recognition that ABC member companies are highly professional and treat their employees as such has been growing on Beacon Hill. As the Market Basket story plays out in headlines and in TV screens across Massachusetts, the public is also learning about the partnership between non-union companies and their workers.

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