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The importance and success of ABC member advocacy on Beacon Hill - by Joe Barbone

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Joe Barbone

ABC-Mass. Chapter

With a new legislative session underway, now is a good time to remember just how important your political involvement is to our organization. ABC's success in recent years making our case on Beacon Hill and fending off legislation that would hurt our members has paid dividends for member's companies and the construction industry.

There are a number of things you can do to build on our momentum. One is to become an ABC Advocate. ABC Advocates advise staff on current issues impacting the construction industry so they are informed and understand your day-to-day issues. They establish personal connections with elected officials, such as their state Senators and Representatives, and make themselves available to speak to public officials about issues affecting the industry and overall business community. Offering elected officials on-site company visits are another way ABC Advocates can create an all-important personal connection with state decision makers.

Now that we have an administration in place on Beacon Hill that seeks our input, there are many volunteer and part-time positions on boards, commissions and in agencies that are available to those who want to help the merit shop industry. These entities make policy, draft and enact regulations, and set standards that impact their respective industries. It is a setting in which any one individual can make a significant contribution. If the merit shop industry is inadequately represented, our voices will not be heard. If you have an interest, there is an opportunity - just let us know.

Voter Voice is a new action alert system that allows ABC to connect with members and members to connect with elected officials. With just a few keystrokes, you can find your elected officials and send messages to your state Representatives and Senators. Visit www.abcma.org and select "Take Action" under the Advocacy tab to sign up.

Finally, the ABC Political Action Committee plays a critical in our efforts to advocate on behalf of the merit shop and your company's right to work in an open, competitive construction marketplace. This is an important tool for supporting candidates from districts across the Commonwealth who favor

free enterprise, including those who represent your area. If you would like to assist in this important effort, please either write a personal check up to \$500 (any amount is appreciated) made out to "Associated Builders and Contractors PAC" and send it to Merit Shop Events at P.O. Box 792, Burlington, MA, 01803, or contribute online via personal credit card by visiting www.abcma.org and selecting "ABC PAC" under the Advocacy tab.

I know this is a busy time in our industry, but there is no better way to ensure that business stays good for ABC member companies than to take the time to get to know elected officials and support those who advocate for fair and open competition in the construction industry.

Happy spring and best wishes for continued success within each of your organizations.

Joe Barbone is the 2017 chairman of the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. – Mass. Chapter, Woburn, Mass. and is the president and CEO of Methuen Construction, Plaistow, N.H.

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