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Having a voice in legislative matters is important to ABC - by John Anderson

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In recent years our members have become increasingly involved in politics. Although dealing with state legislators and other elected officials may not be what we envisioned when we embarked on construction careers, I believe that involvement has paid off. Today ABC has a seat at the table for issues that affect our industry and we have made great progress preventing legislation that would harm member companies. We are now beginning to affirmatively push for policies that promote fair and open competition.

But on a day-to-day basis our work is even more impacted by decisions made by the licensed trade boards. For example, the electrical board has recently dealt with issues such as whether apprentices should be registered with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards and be subject to restrictive ratio requirements, and they are currently conducting a number of listening sessions throughout the state for the public to comment on enforcement, corporate licensing, exams, and vocational schools. The Pipefitter, Sprinkler and Refrigeration Bureau will be reviewing the definition of “sprinkler fitting.” And all boards regularly interpret regulations and issue determinations on factual situations that impact the industry.

Not too long ago, these boards were made up almost exclusively of union appointees, even though over 80 percent of Massachusetts construction workers choose not to join a union. Governor Baker has changed all that, using his appointments to balance these important boards.

But we can't rely on governor Baker, or any other elected official, to solve all our problems. Even though these boards are now far more balanced, the attending public has a significant impact on the direction and agenda of the boards. We need to attend these public meetings and make our priorities known to board members. If we don't, it's only natural that they will assume that the opinions they hear at their meetings are those of the industry as a whole.

I know – and am thankful for – how busy so many of our companies are amidst the current boom. But if you have any extra time or know someone who does, think about making yourself available or urging them to serve on one of the boards by contacting ABC president Greg Beeman at

greg@abcma.org.

Having a voice in legislative matters is an important achievement for ABC companies. The next step is to make sure that voice is also heard by the licensed trade boards that have so much influence over what we do.

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