



April 16, 2015

Rep. Ryan Smith, Chairman
Ohio House Finance Committee
77 S. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Smith / Vice –Chair Schuring / Ranking Member Driehaus:

My name is Michael Knisley and I am Business Manager of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 776. I also serve as President of the Affiliated Construction Trades Ohio Foundation (“ACT Ohio”). ACT Ohio has 14 regional councils and 137 local affiliates representing more than 91,000 construction workers in the state of Ohio.

In my various capacities, I urge the removal of a provision within the current version of HB 64 which would prohibit a state agency or political subdivision from entering into a project labor agreement. This prohibition represents poor public policy and is unconstitutional.

Project Labor Agreements, commonly known as “PLAs” are a type of contract regularly used in the construction industry to set the terms and conditions of employment on projects which are often large scale and complex in scope.

PLAs ensure that a project utilizes the highest skilled local workforce available. Building trades’ members complete a 4 or 5 year apprenticeship program. In these programs our members learn their trades with both in classroom and on the job training. Our contractors and affiliates invest millions annually into these programs, which also receive no public funding. In fact, collectively Building Trades apprenticeship programs invest over \$1 billion nationally and are second largest provider of higher education behind the University System of California.

According to the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, Building Trades apprenticeship programs had 8,278 students as of October 2014, which represents over 60% of indentured apprentices in Ohio. PLAs guarantee access to most highly skilled local workforce, do not raise the cost of construction and do not stifle competition within the industry. Therefore, I strongly support their usage on both public and private projects across the state.

Accordingly, on behalf of our almost 92,000 members, I urge the removal of language within HB 64 which would prohibit public sector project agreements.

Sincerely,

Michael Knisley, President



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