



TESTIMONY OF DAVID WONDOLOWSKI

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

Re: Opposition to Operating Budget Language Prohibiting Project Agreements

Chairman Smith / Vice Chair Schuring / Ranking Member Drllehaus:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. My name is David Wondolowski, and I am the Executive Secretary for the Cleveland Building & Construction Trades Council. My council represents over 10,000 of the most highly skilled, highly trained construction workers in NE Ohio.

In addition, I serve as an Executive Board member of ACT Ohio, representing the interests of 14 regional councils, 137 local affiliates and 92,000 construction workers across Ohio.

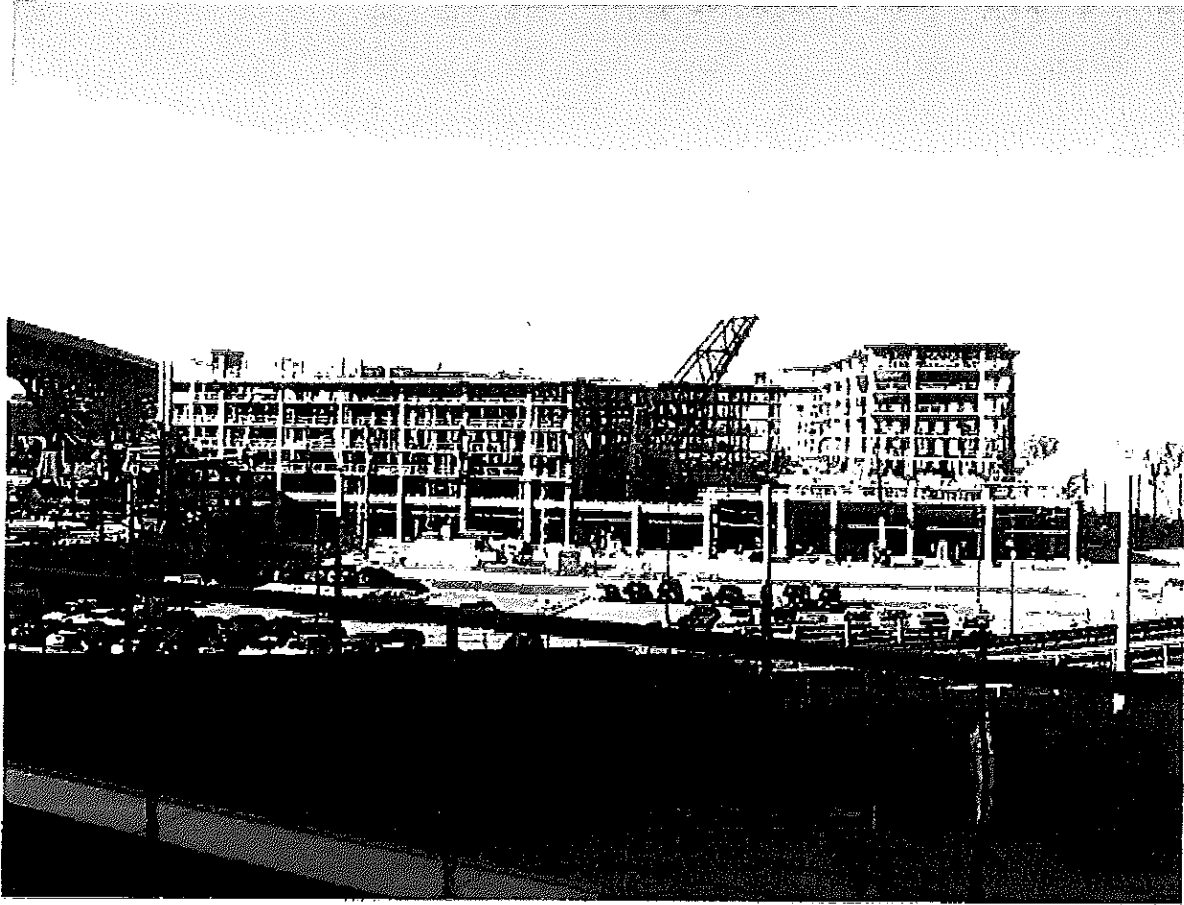
In both capacities, I am here to express to you my vehement opposition to the language inserted into the Operating Budget Tuesday that would prohibit utilization of project labor agreements.

In my experience, if there is one thing project owners detest, and avoid at virtually all costs, its delay. Delays cost project owners money. Delays cost project owners tenants. Delays cost construction managers their jobs. This is why project labor agreements are so effective in the industry – complications with respect to workforce disputes are contractually eliminated before the project begins.

Project labor agreements are an industry custom in NE Ohio, and across the state. I have personally negotiated hundreds of these agreements over the course of my career and in my current capacity.

The following represents a partial list of recent agreements in my jurisdiction:

Cleveland Museum of Art	Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland Public Square Recon.	Progressive Field
Berea City School District	South Park Mall
Cleveland Browns Stadium	Parma Emergency Communications Ctr.
Cuyahoga County	Lakewood Public Library
Euclid City School District	Legacy Village
Euclid Golf Course	Arcelor Mital Steel
Federal Reserve Bank	Maple Heights Dispatch Center
MetroHealth Systems	Parma Industrial Park
North Olmsted Fire Station	Parma Justice Center
North Royalton	Severance Hall
Painesville Morley Library	Forest City Enterprises-Tower City
Parma City Schools	University Hospital
Parma Fire Station	Hopkins Airport Radio Control Tower
AJ Celebrezze Federal Bldg.	Cleveland Clinic
Quicken Loans Arena	Horseshoe Casino



The East Bank of the Flats project currently under construction pursuant to a project labor agreement in Cleveland, Ohio

Project labor agreements are not for use on every construction project – I do not advocate for that. However, there are many projects of a complex nature, or on a strict timeline where an agreement brings true value. Other benefits realized through project labor agreements include:

1. Making large projects easier to manage by placing unions under one contract, the PLA, rather than dealing with several union contracts that may have widely varying terms and conditions;
2. Including provisions to recruit and train workers by requiring contractors to participate in recruitment, apprenticeship, and training programs for veterans (Helmets to HardHats program), women, minorities, and other under-represented groups;
3. Reducing misclassification of workers and the related underpayment of payroll taxes, workers compensation, and other requirements;
4. Improving worker safety by requiring contractors and workers to comply with project safety rules.

Personally, I believe that developing qualified workers in the construction trades, including people who historically were underrepresented in the industry, has a positive long-term economic benefit for the individuals who receive the jobs, for the construction industry, and for the community as a whole.

In addition to these points, I want to stress the commitment that the building trades have made to apprenticeship training. Our affiliates' multi-million dollar training centers across the state are second to none nationally, and are 100% privately funded through agreed upon employer and employee contributions, and jointly trusteeed with equal numbers of management and labor representatives. Most of our training programs partner with Ohio's community colleges, allowing our apprentices to accumulate college credits.

To provide the Committee with some scale, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Workforce Development, as of October 3, 2014, there were 8,278 registered apprentices in building trades joint-sponsored apprenticeship training programs across Ohio. By comparison, the number of apprentices registered by the 3 Ohio chapters of the Associated Builders and Contractors organization, which opposes use of project agreements, totals 474. This level of investment by the building trades and their partner-contractors is significant, and is a basis for Ohio's nationally renowned reputation regarding its skilled construction workforce.

In short, the building trades are preparing tomorrow's construction workforce, and this language prohibiting project labor agreements would truly harm our efforts.

As such, I respectfully request the removal of the language from HB 64 regarding the prohibition of this important tool for our industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee – I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

David Wondolowski