

NEWS RELEASE

Associated Builders and Contractors

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ABC OPPOSES NEW DAVIS-BACON “HELPER” REGULATIONS

(Washington, DC)—November 17, 2000—Associated Builders and Contractors today expressed strong disapproval of the new Davis-Bacon helpers regulation released by the Clinton Administration today.

"Associated Builders and Contractors is disappointed that at the 11th hour the Clinton administration would push through a regulation on Davis-Bacon helpers that is harmful to American workers. This Davis-Bacon helpers regulation closes the door on entry level helpers who should be allowed to earn while they learn," said W. Thomas Musser, national president, ABC. "By refusing to designate wages for helpers who assist skilled journeymen, this regulation forces employers to pay artificially inflated wages for entry level jobs, thereby pricing out and excluding vital new entrants to the industry. ABC is contemplating litigation on this regulations since it ignores the realities of the workplace and refuses to recognize a prevailing class of workers."

ABC criticized the Department of Labor for reverting to a rule that was deemed unworkable by the department in 1982.

"It is remarkable that the Labor Department has promulgated a rule which codifies an obsolete, unworkable definition of helpers and would fail to recognize prevailing practices in the industry," said Musser. "It is also troubling that this regulation which will hurt American workers was enacted so that it goes into effect only a day before a new administration is to be sworn in at the White House."

ABC believes that helpers are a vital stepping stone to a career in the construction industry and that helpers should be recognized on public projects in the same way that they are recognized on private projects. ABC members have testified before Congress on their experience with “helpers” on construction projects and the vital importance of this designation to give young people a chance to learn and excel in the construction industry.

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Associated Builders and Contractors is a national association representing more than 22,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms in over 80 chapters across the United States.