

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 3, 2024**

## **Associated Builders & Contractors, Keystone Chapter, Opposes House Bill 2153**

(Harrisburg, PA) Today, the Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC), Keystone Chapter, joined legislators, business leaders, and local governments to express strong opposition to House Bill 2153, which seeks to drastically expand prevailing wage requirements in Pennsylvania.

House Bill 2153 proposes changes that would prohibit current legal practices under the Prevailing Wage Act. Currently, a worker trained and able to perform multiple tasks can do so, provided they are appropriately compensated for tasks classified at different rates. The bill seeks to eliminate this efficiency by mandating that workers be restricted to specific tasks. Consequently, a single worker will no longer be able to multi-task, leading to increased reliance on additional workers regardless of their ability or skill to perform multiple functions. This change will inevitably add time and costs to public works projects.

ABC Keystone President & CEO, G. David Sload, expressed his concerns: “Our organization represents 30,000 workers who strongly oppose HB 2153. It was drafted without understanding how our industry operates or considering the benefits of these legal practices to taxpayers. This jaded and uninformed perspective will harm taxpayers and send a message to Pennsylvania businesses that innovation is discouraged. The fact that legislators are willing to overlook the negative impact this bill will have on 90 percent of the workforce, which is non-union, is concerning.”

In addition, HB 2153 intends to require that any materials provided off the construction site be subject to prevailing wage rates. While this might appear innocuous, it discourages efficiencies where materials are assembled offsite for quick installation or where larger structures are built in climate-controlled, zero-emission settings. This method has proven to be a significant cost-saving measure for private sector clients and helps complete projects more quickly. The bill leaves significant questions unanswered about the logistics of materials, including their transportation and the extent of the supply chain. Adding red tape in these areas will undoubtedly increase costs, imposing a higher burden on taxpayers for public projects.

Representative Ryan Mackenzie (R-Lehigh), republican chair of House Labor & Industry Committee stated, “Many Pennsylvanians are struggling to make ends meet due to inflation and the high cost of housing. The last thing we should be doing is taking up legislation that would actually raise the cost of any housing options. We need more affordable publicly funded housing to be coming on to the market, not less.

We know that there has been significant innovation in the construction industry. One thing that has happened is that more work is being done off-site to speed up the process of getting housing online. Because of delays in permitting and government red tape, housing can often take a long time. This way, prefabricated components can be placed onto a construction site as soon as it is allowed. This is an innovative way to speed up the construction process and get new, affordable housing options online as

quickly as possible, including projects funded with government dollars.

This legislation would extend prevailing wage beyond an actual construction job site, something that is not currently in place anywhere else in the law today, and it would do it on publicly funded housing. At a time when housing stock is low and prices are high, this is exactly the wrong policy to take up.

It is shocking to me that this bill that would increase costs of housing on individuals and working families received any positive votes at a time when so many people are already struggling with high prices on things like food, energy, and rent.”

ABC Keystone urges all stakeholders to join in opposing House Bill 2153 to protect the efficiency, innovation, and cost-effectiveness of public works projects in Pennsylvania.

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The Keystone Chapter provides member services to more than 665 members across 33 counties in Central PA. ABC Keystone is now the 3rd largest of ABC National's 67 Chapters. Visit us at [abckeystone.org](http://abckeystone.org).