



January 15, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen and Members of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 67 chapters representing more than 23,000 members, I write to express ABC's enthusiasm to continue working alongside the committee as it begins the 119th Congress with a hearing, "[America Builds: The State of the Nation's Transportation System](#)." ABC members play a significant role in building America's infrastructure and between fiscal years 2009 and 2023, ABC prime contractors won [more than half of large federal contracts of \\$35 million or more, representing 54% of their value](#).

During the 119th Congress, representatives, senators and the Trump administration have a unique opportunity to enhance America's infrastructure, and the committee will play a central role in this process. Many opportunities for efficiency and cost improvements will be associated with repealing burdensome policies and rulemakings advanced by the Biden administration. At the same time, the committee will lay the foundation for future infrastructure projects through the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act. ABC encourages the committee to consider the following principles to maximize the effectiveness of federal dollars as it evaluates legislation and regulatory reform this Congress:

- **Fair and Open Competition:** Former President Joe Biden enacted a project labor agreement mandate limiting 89.3% of contractors from bidding on federal construction projects. The most cost-effective way to build infrastructure is to promote a fair and open competitive procurement process, free from project labor agreement mandates. This process reduces federal contract costs by up to 20% and ensures that federal infrastructure projects benefit all of America's workers, regardless of labor affiliation.
- **Workforce Development:** At a time when the construction industry needs to attract an estimated 501,000 additional workers on top of the normal pace of hiring to meet the demand for labor, attracting employees remains one of the industry's greatest challenges. To address this challenge, Congress should prioritize an all-of-the-above workforce development strategy that provides opportunities for all workers regardless of labor affiliation.

ABC supports policies that provide workers and employers the freedom to choose the best way to create value and help build and rebuild America. By promoting both industry-driven and government-registered apprenticeship programs, the committee can enhance small businesses participation on federal projects and reduce the deterrence of registered apprenticeship program's costs and paperwork.

ABC and its 67 chapters currently provide more than 450 GRAPs in over 20 construction industry trades such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, HVAC, welding and more. None of these ABC chapter GRAPs are affiliated with unions. ABC urges the committee to oppose policies that make federal contract awards contingent upon completing exclusionary programs that disregard the skills of existing workers.

- **Davis-Bacon and Related Acts:** The Davis-Bacon Act, as currently administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, unnecessarily hinders economic growth and stifles contractor productivity by mandating wage rates on federal construction projects that fail to reflect true, market-based rates. The main culprit for these frequent discrepancies is the flawed, unscientific wage survey process that the DOL uses to calculate these so-called “prevailing” wages. According to DOL estimates, DBA collectively applies to an estimated \$217 billion in federal and federally assisted construction spending per year—which was about two-thirds of all public works spending in 2021.

ABC supports the true reform and/or repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act to save valuable taxpayer dollars, improve federal wage determinations, eliminate unnecessary and cumbersome bureaucracy for contractors, limit the negative impacts of the DOL’s prevailing wage policy and support benefit rates that accurately reflect the current construction market.

ABC appreciates the opportunity to comment on today’s hearing and looks forward to continuing to work with the committee during the 119th Congress.

ABC members stand ready to build America’s infrastructure in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Swearingen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Legislative & Political Affairs