

Building and Construction Trades

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March 27, 2017

Committee on Oversight & Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative

On behalf of the 3 million skilled craft professionals that comprise North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), I write in strong opposition to H.R. 1552 introduced by Congressman Dennis Ross (R-FL). Rather than providing for "fair and open competition" in federal procurement, if enacted this bill will not only place burdensome restrictions on government contractors but also represents an outright prohibition on the use of project labor agreements (PLAs).

A PLA is a collective bargaining agreement that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for contractors and workers engaged on a multi-employer construction site. It is a market-based, project efficiency tool that helps to ensure an "on time, on budget" result on projects. Further, PLAs do not restrict work opportunities to union members, in fact, federal law prohibits employers from discriminating against employees based on whether they are members of a union or not. Anyone willing to work under the terms of the agreement is open to apply for work on the project.

The benefits associated with the use of PLAs are significant. The PLA model promotes career training opportunities and in many instances, can contain specific community goals which provide for local hire, encourage the hiring of veterans and provide access to careers in the construction industry to women and communities of color. These are sound economic development opportunities for communities across the country. This piece of legislation would prohibit the federal government from using an efficiency tool that is widely used by cost conscious corporations. PLAs are used aggressively in the private sector, by a variety of profit oriented companies --Toyota, TransCanada, Walmart, Disney, and Southern Company are key examples of industry partners who utilize PLAs. They use them because they work.

The federal government is a massive procurer of construction services and when a public investment is made taxpayers should be given the opportunity to see their tax dollars being spent in a responsible way. I strongly urge you to reject this misguided bill and to ensure that the PLAs remain an option on a case by case basis, that represents a true commitment to "fair and open competition," in the marketplace.

With kind regards I am,

Sincerely,

Sean McGarvey
President