



Connecticut Contractors' Day at the Capitol

About the Associations:

CT ABC- Associated Builders and Contractors of Connecticut (CT ABC) is a membership association representing Merit Shop contractors. Merit Shop Contractors account for over 80% of the construction industry in Connecticut and 86% of the industry nationwide. Our 200 plus members are afforded an effective voice in the political system at the local, state and federal levels. Merit Shop is free enterprise - the belief that all construction contracts should be awarded to the lowest responsible, qualified bidder based on merit, regardless of the company's non-union or union affiliation. We are a voluntary membership organization working to support and advance the entire construction industry. Our membership is diverse; ranging from some of the largest and most established firms in Connecticut to new firms who have just entered the commercial and public construction market. **Contact: Chris Syrek, chris@ctabc.org**

IEC of New England- Founded in 1957, the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) is a national trade association for merit shop electrical and systems contractors. IEC believes in developing and fostering a stronger economy through the level of quality and services its members provide to the industry. For more than five decades, IEC has faced the challenges imposed by the ever-changing world of the electrical industry. IEC has built a reputation as the premier trade association for America's independent electrical and systems contractors, aggressively working with the industry to establish a free environment for merit shop. With more than 3,000 member companies in 53 chapters throughout the USA, the association serves as the voice of the electrical and systems contracting industry on policies affecting its membership. IEC attempts to further the growth of the U.S. economy through skilled manpower and the principle of free enterprise. **Contact: Cheryl Dudus, Cheryl@iecne.org**

UCAC – The Utility Contractors Association of Connecticut (UCAC) represents the underground utility and site work construction industry in Connecticut. UCAC is comprised of contractors, vendors, suppliers and manufacturers who support the utility contracting and construction industry. UCAC contractor members perform work to improve and enhance the utility infrastructure. **Contact: Matthew Hallisey, mhallisey@mhga.net**

CT-PHCC- Founded in 1890, the Connecticut Association of Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors is the not-for-profit trade association that represents union and non-union plumbing, heating and cooling contractors throughout the state. The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors – National Association is America's premier trade group for the p-h-c professional. PHCC has almost 4,000 open and union shop contractor members who successfully manage businesses in residential service and new construction, commercial and industrial markets. **Contact: Gina Scumaci, execdirector@ct-phcc.org**

CHCC - Organized in 1972, the Connecticut Heating and Cooling Contractors Association is an independent non-profit trade association with membership open to all state licensed (merit shop) heating, refrigeration and air conditioning contractors, sheetmetal contractors and plumbers that employ licensed mechanics according to state law. Our objectives are to strengthen and further trade relations, attract, educate and train necessary manpower, represent members at all levels of government and review and establish quality standards and procedures. **Contact: Jennifer Jennings, jjennings@chcc.net**



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Key Issues and Legislation

Apprenticeship and Workforce Development: Our associations pride ourselves on training a highly skilled workforce to meet the demands of the industry. However, as our economy continues to improve, it is of concern that we are not adding enough tradesmen back into the workforce. If the workforce continues to age and those retiring are not replaced by young people entering the trades, we will end up with a shortage of skilled tradesmen which some experts fear we are nearing. Although each of our associations work extremely hard to encourage more people to consider careers in construction, there are still many barriers that exist.

Support: SB 353 making reasonable changes to the apprentice hiring ratio and also establish a working group consisting of both union and non-union industry groups responsible for studying the issue of the apprentice hiring ratio. This working group would be statutory, report to the General Law Committee, and file an annual report with the legislature.

Hiring Mandates: The construction economy is at its best when there is a level playing field, and every contract is competitively bid and awarded to the lowest, qualified and most responsible bidder. Mandates such as Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and Responsible Contractor Ordinances (RCOs) are also harmful to our industry and unfairly discriminate against our members and other merit shop contractors. The issue of prevailing wage has been discussed this session as well. Prevailing wage laws establish a "minimum wage" for public construction projects, as well as a "fringe benefit" that is paid to each employee to cover healthcare, retirement, etc. The thresholds which trigger prevailing wage have also not been increased in 25 years.

Support: SB 992, which would make reasonable reforms to CHRO's contract compliance process, by requiring that CHRO respond to each submitted Affirmative Action Plan within 60 days. Currently, there is an enormous backlog of plans that have not been acted on and contractors often will wait up to a year for a plan to be approved or denied. In many instances, projects are completed before CHRO reviews the Affirmative Action Plan.

Support: Reforms to the Prevailing Wage Law. Many Legislators and the Governor see the need to provide municipalities with relief by increasing the Prevailing Wage Thresholds. As both the thresholds for new construction (\$400,000) and renovations (\$100,000) have not been changed in 25 years, we believe it is time to raise the thresholds and index them each year to inflation. This would allow for more small projects to be completed creating more construction jobs.

Oppose: SB 747, which would require all employers to post three week work schedules and pay penalties if those schedules were changed within 24 hours. Schedules in the construction industry can be especially unpredictable given weather, project delays, personnel needs and other factors that are out of the employer's control. This bill is overly burdensome and unworkable for the construction industry.

General Employer Issues: Connecticut is often criticized as not being friendly to our business community, and the construction industry certainly shares some of those concerns. Rules and regulations governing the construction industry are important to ensure a safe work environment and maintain a level playing field for all contractors that do business in the state. However, certain laws and some bills that have been proposed this session are overly burdensome, and make it harder for employers to create good paying construction jobs to help bring back our economy.

Oppose: The establishment of a Paid Family and Medical Leave program in the State. This legislation, in its current form, creates a state managed benefit fund that is entirely unsustainable and places an undue burden on employers to comply with the proposed law. The employee is also affected by being forced to pay into the benefit fund. Most states do not have paid FMLA and this would simply be another mandate to put Connecticut at a further disadvantage when trying to attract employers to our state.
