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Hawaii Chapter

ABC Hawaii Chapter Blasts Gov. Neil Abercrombie's Effort to Funnel State Construction Projects to Big Labor

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For Immediate Release

May 23, 2012

Honolulu – Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Hawaii Chapter today strongly criticized Gov. Neil Abercrombie for his decision to issue an administrative directive that mandates the use of project labor agreements (PLAs) on state construction projects.

“This directive is a clear handout to construction union bosses,” said ABC Hawaii Chapter President Jonathan Young. “Gov. Abercrombie says he is concerned about jobs, but this directive shows he only cares about workers if they come with a union card.”

PLAs are a Big Labor scheme used to discourage competition from nonunion contractors and their workers by requiring that construction projects be awarded only to contractors and subcontractors that agree to recognize unions as the representatives of their employees on that job; use the union hall to obtain workers; obey the union’s restrictive apprenticeship and work rules; and contribute to union pension plans and other funds in which their nonunion employees will never benefit unless they join a union.

When a government entity requires a PLA on a construction project, it tilts the playing field in favor of contractors that agree to Big Labor’s demands. This directive will mean that the 67 percent of Hawaii’s construction workforce that chooses not to join a labor union cannot compete on an equal basis for projects funded by their own tax dollars.

Additionally, PLA mandates deprive taxpayers of the opportunity to get the best construction at the best price. Numerous studies show that PLA mandates can increase construction costs by nearly 20 percent.

“By requiring PLAs on taxpayer-funded projects in order to repay a political ally, Gov. Abercrombie’s mandate will effectively force taxpayers to buy four buildings for the price of five and deprive quality local craftspeople of the opportunity to work on projects funded by their own tax dollars,” said Young. “This is a terrible policy for the people of Hawaii. ABC and its members urge Gov. Abercrombie to repeal this policy immediately, so both policymakers and the general public can learn more about what PLA mandates mean for Hawaii’s taxpayers and its construction workforce.”

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Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) is a national association with 74 chapters representing 22,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms. Visit us at www.abc.org. To learn more about wasteful and discriminatory project labor agreements, visit www.thetruthaboutplas.com.

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