**Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter**

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**Press Release – For Immediate Release**

**ABC Opposes Discriminatory, Costly PLA on East Side Fire Station**

**Allentown, PA (September X, 2012) –** [Associated Builders and Contractors Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter](http://www.abceastpa.org/) (ABC) is outraged about the discriminatory union-only Project Labor Agreement (PLA) on the construction of the new East Side Fire Station in Allentown.

“Construction projects should be awarded on merit, not labor affiliation,” said Mary Tebeau, president of ABC Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter. “By choosing to implement a PLA on its new fire station, the City of Allentown is wasting taxpayers’ money and limiting local job creation.”

PLAs discourage or eliminate merit shop contractors from competing for and winning contracts on construction projects. Construction contracts subject to PLAs are almost always awarded exclusively to unionized contractors and their all-union workforces.

The City of Allentown will spend an extra $216,000 to $324,000 for the $1.8 million East Side Fire Station because of the PLA. By unnecessarily limiting bidders and following [outdated and inefficient union work rules](http://www.thetruthaboutplas.com/2010/03/13/required-reading-on-multi-employer-pension-plan-crisis/), PLAs consistently and unnecessarily drive up costs on projects. Numerous [academic studies](http://www.abc.org/plastudies) of public construction projects subject to prevailing wage laws indicate PLAs increase the cost of construction between 12 percent and 18 percent when compared to similar projects not subject to union-only PLAs.

Proponents of PLAs claim PLAs ensure the use of local workers. The truth is that PLAs [fail](http://thetruthaboutplas.com/2010/08/05/project-labor-agreements-and-big-labor-fail-at-local-job-creation/) at real local hire and job creation. PLA supporters fail to mention the term “local workers” excludes local nonunion workers. This rhetoric is particularly misleading since only 14 percent of U.S. construction workers belong to a union. In construction markets where the demand for union labor is greater than the supply, union workers from outside the local area are given preference over qualified local nonunion workers on PLA projects. These union workers are called travelers or boomers, and they take jobs away from local and qualified nonunion craft employees.

ABC Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter represents more than 15,000 merit construction employees who work for its more than 400 member companies. It was founded on the shared belief that construction projects should be awarded on merit to the most qualified and responsible low bidders. Nationally, [Associated Builders and Contractors](http://www.abc.org) is comprised of 74 chapters representing more than 22,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms with nearly two million employees. Learn more about ABC Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter at [abceastpa.org](http://www.abceastpa.org/).

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