



PRESS RELEASE

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UMASS BUILDING AUTHORITY ENDORSES PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENT FOR BOSTON CONSTRUCTION

University would pay premium for union-only construction as tuition, fees skyrocket

BOSTON – The University of Massachusetts Building Authority voted yesterday to support the use of a project labor agreement (PLA) for construction associated with UMass Boston’s master plan. Building the projects included in the plan is expected to cost \$750 million over the next 10 years.

PLAs exclude non-union workers by requiring unions to be the “sole and exclusive” source of all jobsite labor. According to unionstats.com, 80 percent of Massachusetts construction workers are not union members.

“UMass tuition and fees have doubled over the last decade,” said Associated Builders and Contractors of Massachusetts President Greg Beeman. “Only in an election year would anyone vote to increase costs even more by mandating union-only construction. This is exactly the kind of election-year politics people are fed up with.”

A study of school construction conducted by Suffolk University’s Beacon Hill Institute found that PLA’s increased construction expenses by at least 12 percent. Reduced competition and onerous union work rules account for the higher costs. All public construction is subject to prevailing wage laws, which mandate wage rates.

The UMass Building Authority is appointed by Governor Patrick. Its vote comes just three months after a speech to the building trades unions in which Patrick promised that UMass Boston’s \$150 million science center, which is part of the master plan, would be built using a PLA. The Governor listed a long list of other projects as PLA candidates.

Taxpayers understand that union-only construction needlessly increases costs. In a recent Suffolk University/7 News poll, 69 percent of state residents opposed the union-only requirement that is at the heart of PLAs. In his speech to the building trades, Governor Patrick bragged that 80 percent of the construction work controlled by his administration is being conducted by union labor.

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