

Will Senate Committee Vote to Eliminate Construction Opportunities?

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SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) | By Associated Builders & Contractors INC.

If passed, Bill 825 will have punishing effect on women-owned companies, veterans, and the formerly incarcerated

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA(MPG) - A committee of the State Senate will this week consider a dual-action bill that would simultaneously prohibit most construction companies from competing on Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation projects for 10 years and eliminate pre-apprenticeship curricula that has facilitated employment opportunities for thousands of men and women in California.

A hearing on Senate Bill 825 will be held by the Senate Labor & Industrial Relations Committee in Room 2040 of the State Capitol, Wednesday, April 11, at 9:30 a.m. The hearing can be viewed live on the [California Senate website](#).

Section 2 of Senate Bill 825 would erect a barrier against smaller construction companies, including those owned by women and minorities, by requiring CDCR to sign a 10-year community workforce agreement (Project Labor Agreement) for all construction of \$500,000 or more.

Community workforce agreements, or PLAs, are exclusive construction contracts between public agencies and labor unions for projects such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and police and fire stations. While well-intended, the exclusive nature of these PLA/CWA contracts prevent local contractors and small-business owners from competing for projects.

Traditionally, PLAs require the use of union labor, even if the successful bidding company is non-union. So, when a non-union company is granted the contract, it must perform the work using union workers rather than their own skilled and trained employees. Therefore, a company may not hire its own employees for a particular job, including workers who were formerly incarcerated.

Additionally, SB 825 would prohibit use of the National Center for Construction Education and Research's (NCCER) CORE curriculum, a curriculum that 18,000 individuals have completed in the past 10 years at one of 108 locations throughout California. The California Department of Education, the state Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the California State University system, and the state's community college system have all partnered with NCCER. Instead, SB 825 would turn all pre-apprentice training over to labor organizations.

“The community workforce agreement contained in Senate Bill 825 would discourage nearly 82 percent of California's construction workforce from competing for and winning construction

contracts,” said Michele Daugherty, President and CEO of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Northern California. “Furthermore, limiting inmates to just union labor when 80 percent of construction jobs in California are provided by contractors not signed to a collective bargaining agreement, severely hampers their pursuit of a construction career. We should keep every possible door of opportunity open for those who served time and now seek a new chapter in their life.”

Testifying in opposition to SB 825 will be:

- Christine Leone of San Jose, who started her own electrical contracting company, Leone Electric, 1993
- Jay Hanicek, owner of American Plumbing Systems in Rancho Cordova, who started his business as a single dad
- Robert Stewart, a superintendent for Oakland-based Helix Electric, who is a graduate of a prison training program.