

Texas

January 2017

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Journal

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2016 Election Recap



ONE-ON-ONE WITH STATE REPRESENTATIVE BYRON COOK

Texas State Representative **Byron Cook** discusses protection of children, improving school finance, transparency in elections, and union influence.

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LETTER from the Chairman



JOHNSON

Well, state and federal elections are complete (mostly), with members of the Republican Party seizing control of the US Presidency, Senate, and House of Representatives; as well as the governor's mansion and both chambers of the state legislatures of 24 states. In fact, Republican members increased their governorships to 34 out of the 50 states (68%) as well as controlling 67 of 98 state legislative bodies (68%): a stunning accomplishment. Members of the Republican Party continue to control the governorship, and both chambers of the state legislature in Texas. ABC of Texas has identified its political priorities which Jon fully discusses in a separate article in this publication.

Whatever one's political leanings, the current atmosphere in America reminds me of that 1964 Bob Dylan song "The Times They are a Changin' ". The song speaks to the ever-changing views on society; where we have been, where are we now, and where are we going.

The song was written and recorded during the civil rights and folk music movements of the American 60's; critic Michael Gray stated that "Dylan's aim was to ride upon the unvoiced sentiment of a mass public, to give that inchoate sentiment an anthem and give its clamor an outlet". It seems peculiar to this writer, in some perspectives, that the young people who were singing the song in the mid and late 60's, have re-surfaced more than fifty years later as elders to sing the same verses, but with different purpose. As literary critic Christopher Ricks has suggested, "The song transcends the political preoccupations of the time in which it was written."

What has happened in America since the song was recorded? Shortly after recording, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. In 1984, Steve Jobs recited the second version of the song during the unveiling of the first Macintosh. The verses and versions of the song has been used in numerous commercials and recordings. In 2009, even Michael Moore (an extremely liberal filmmaker who foretold the coming of Trump) sang the third verse of the song live on The Jay Leno Show in support of his film "Capitalism: A Love Story."

Where are we in 2016? Voters clearly wanted a change and elected Donald Trump as the change candidate. The blue print for telling those in power what to do was included in the lyrics of the song, and to some extent provided a largely unheeded foreshadowing for both Democrats and Republicans. "Your old road is rapidly agin', so get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand, for the times, they are a-changin'."

Neither political party fully grasped the next verse, "and don't criticize what you can't understand". Perhaps the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Reince Priebus, stated it best when Trump became the presumptive nominee of the party, "I would be lying to you all if I said, 'okay this is going to be easy, we're just going to pivot... we need time to unify and we will unify — but this is what today starts. It's this unification process"

There is a sense of foreboding among some in America about the future, because change is difficult. But for others there is a sense of excitement, a vigor arising from a renewed sense of self-worth and ability to move forward positively. Quoting President Obama, "The world is changing, you can't maintain power through coercion". This writer believes that fifty years from now people will look back on the change candidate and state he was on the right side of history.

Wes Johnson
2015 - 2017 ABC of Texas Chairman
The Gardner Law Firm

LETTER from the President



FISHER

By the time you get this issue, the start of the 85th Legislature will be just around the corner. ABC of Texas has an ambitious legislative agenda...again!

It is important to remember that the only thing the Texas Legislature has to do is fund state government for the next two years. Everything else falls behind this priority. Next in line are the priorities of leadership—Governor, Lieutenant Governor, House Speaker and others. The rest of us compete in a finite amount of time for the Legislature to consider our proposals. And, since the first 60 days are reserved for the filing of bills, and only Governor-designated emergencies can be considered, that leaves only 80 days for the bulk of the work to be accomplished. Further, end of session deadlines remove another 2 weeks at the end. That effectively means we have only about 66 days to pass an appropriations bill and consider everything else.

The Texas Legislature accomplishes much in an amazingly short period of time. Also, remember that our Legislators are citizen-legislators. They all have other jobs and leave those and family behind to do our work in less than 5 months. For this, they get \$600 a month! Every Legislator sacrifices to perform this very important work every two years.

So, remember, when you are contacting your Legislator that he or she is making this sacrifice to continue to make Texas a better place to live and work. Also, remember that these individuals represent the people that elect them. If someone disagrees with us on an issue, it is generally because that person believes the people that elected that person disagree with us.


We are fortunate to have a conservative, business-oriented Texas Legislature and statewide leaders. That has served Texas well. They recognize that business is the only thing that really creates jobs and maintains our economy. And, they accomplish so much because most respect those that disagree with them and try their best to work together for the good of the state.

One of my longtime Legislator friends asked me toward the end of the session in 2011, "Well, have we done any harm yet?" I answered, "No, but you've still got some time!" I mention that because, for business, that is the most important thing they can accomplish—doing no harm. If everyone asking for bills to pass loses their bills and, in the process, every bill that could have damaged their business also fails to pass, something good has happened.

We may have an ambitious agenda, but first and foremost, we have to prevent the passage of legislation that can harm your business. We'll work hard to "move the ball forward," but we have to remain resolute to prevent something bad from passing.

As things stand now, I plan to work for you this session and next full time. After that, there are plans for a transition to a new State President. Your State Board is putting ABC of Texas in good financial condition to accomplish a strong transition that should result in an even more effective ABC of Texas in the future.

In the meantime, there is more work to do. Hope to see you at Legislative Day!



Jon Fisher
ABC of Texas
President



ABC OF TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

BY JON FISHER

The ABC of Texas Board generally sets its legislative priorities in April of even-numbered years. It is an open process with the State President listing issues he is aware of and Board members adding to that list. The Board then votes to determine priorities. Below are the priorities selected for the 85th Texas Legislature.

High Priorities

Neutrality in State Government Contracting

A high priority of ABC National is to protect merit shop contractors by preventing governmental entities from requiring the use of project labor agreements (pre-hire collective bargaining agreements) for projects using state resources. The state would not be regulating labor practices (which is prohibited by the National Labor Relations Act) but acting in its capacity as a proprietor. Our goal is not to prohibit project labor agreements (PLAs) from being used by a contractor, but to prevent one from being required or prohibited by the governmental entity when state resources are being used. These PLAs tend to waste tax money mostly because of outdated union work practices. But, they also are totally inappropriate in a state where over 97% of the construction workforce does not belong to a union.

Lien Law Modernization

Quite simply, the Texas Lien Law is too complicated. ABC of Texas is working with other construction industry groups—primarily AGC-TBB and TCA—to develop a simplified approach that can be embraced by most if not all stakeholders. Of course, the devil is in the details and this project faces considerable barriers if a proposal is perceived to create a significant new disadvantage to any large stakeholder. The goal is to simplify the preservation of lien rights and eliminate complicated tripwires without upsetting the balance in the current scheme. The goal of modernization is not to encourage liens, but to avoid the need to file liens by ensuring that contractors and suppliers are paid. Two of the most critical barriers are fear of change and misunderstanding the changes proposed in this new system (advantages of early notice versus a debt notice).

Public Employees Dues Deduction

Public entities should not be deducting dues for labor unions and employee associations from employees' checks. That is a direct subsidization of those organizations using public money. In many cases, those same organizations are prominent in public officeholders' campaigns. One of the problems is that Texas, being a conservative state, has non-union public employee associations that also engage in this practice. One of the other challenges is that created by exemptions for political reasons and the defensibility of those exemptions.

Other Priorities

E-Verify (Safe Harbor)

If any mandatory E-Verify bill is passed, ABC of Texas wants language assuring employers that the employer will not be penalized if the employer is a victim of fraud AND that an employer is protected from a discrimination lawsuit if the employer relies on E-Verify.

Workers' Compensation (Sole Remedy)

ABC of Texas seeks to eliminate third party lawsuits for which its members generally indemnify owners. Such a change would likely require other changes in the system and are unlikely to even be initiated without a broad coalition. Any attempt to mandate Workers' Compensation for the construction industry will be used as an opportunity to advocate sole remedy.

Employee Misclassification

The construction industry has been criticized for rampant worker misclassification (classifying employees as contractors). Of course, this type of misclassification is not unique to any one industry and may even be more rampant in others. To address the fact that worker misclassification gives violators a competitive advantage over those following the law, ABC of Texas has been willing to address the issue provided that contractors are only responsible for their own hiring decisions, legitimate use of individuals as contractors is protected, and employers are not subject to increased penalties for good faith mistakes or arbitrary agency decisions.

RITIES

State Breach of Contract Cleanup

Legislation was passed in 2013 to provide a waiver of sovereign immunity for state governmental entities for breach of construction contracts. While an important first step, this legislation did not provide the same coverage as the waivers for other governmental entities in Texas. This statute needs to be consistent with the waivers of sovereign immunity for construction contracts with other governmental entities in Texas including recovery of attorney's fees.

Retainage/Trust Funds

While this issue could be addressed in Lien Law Modernization, if Lien Law Modernization does not advance this session, ABC of Texas will join with TCA and AGC-TBB to support a means of assuring that statutory retainage (which protects project owners from liability in excess of the retainage) is available to contractors and subcontractors in the case of a default. Unfortunately, the common practice appears to be to have the lender withhold the amount of the retainage, meaning the money never becomes construction trust funds. Arguably, this practice does not protect the owner since the money was not retained, but the practice most likely only becomes a problem when there is a foreclosure by the lender and the contractors and subcontractors are left with no real lien rights.

License for Journeyman Industrial Electrician

This is a proposal to create a new licensing category, NOT A NEW LICENSING REQUIREMENT. It would allow for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to recognize a third party certification (NCCER Industrial Electrician) as the basis for allowing Electrical Apprentices in the industrial sector to be recognized for this license. For an Apprentice in the industrial sector to become a Journeyman Electrician, that person would have to become proficient in items not used in that person's workplace. This license would still require 8,000 hours as an Apprentice and continuing education and the scope of work would be limited to the industrial sector. 🗝

About the Author



Jon Fisher has been President of ABC of Texas since mid-2008. Prior to that he was senior vice president at Texas Chemical Council. He has led ABC of Texas in preparing plans for legislative sessions and participation in the Texas elections. Most recently, he helped ABC of Texas prepare a Strategic Plan for the next 4 years with emphasis on the next 2 years. To contact Jon, email jon@abctexas.org.

ABC MEMBERS MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD AT TEXAS' CAPITOL

BY JASMINE SWOOPE, ABC GREATER HOUSTON

2016 was a whirlwind election year that kept the entire country on the edge of their seats. Now that the results are in, it's time to look onward to 2017. Each year, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) members join as one powerful voice to inform elected officials about the issues affecting the construction industry and to showcase the opportunities and diversity ABC members contribute to our industry and the Texas economy.

On February 20-21, 2017, ABC members from all eight chapters in Texas will travel to the state's capitol to speak to elected officials about issues currently impacting the industry and Free Enterprise. This momentous occasion is known as ABCs Legislative Day.

"This will be my first time attending Legislative Day and I'm looking forward to the experience," said Craig D. Messer, Vice President of ISC Constructors, LLC. "I've been preparing by attending board meetings, reading legislative updates, and remaining up-to-date on the issues we're focusing on. I think it's very important for us as contractors to stay involved with legislators and ABC has given us this opportunity."

ABC serves as the lynchpin by keeping members informed of current issues, being their political voice, and connecting them to elected officials. ABC has a list of high priority issues that will be on the table for discussion during Legislative Day. Some of those issues are Neutrality in State Government Contracting, Lien Law Modernization, Public Employees Dues Deduction, Retainage/Trust Fund, Worker Misclassification, and more.

Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President, said, "Legislative Day is the perfect opportunity to help with the ABC of Texas Legislative Agenda. Rest assured, Legislators care more about the concerns of constituents and others from their area than lobbyists!"

It's essential for ABC members to take the time to engage and testify to their local legislators about these issues because that is how real change happens. Without the factual accounts of how certain issues and policies affect the industry, it's a challenge to engage in effective conversation and affect change.

"I've attended Legislative Day more than four times in the last eight years and am excited to attend this year," said John Hinson, Division President- Dallas/Ft. Worth of Marek Brothers Systems, Inc. "This session, I will be focused on the Worker Misclassification Issues, Lien Law, and the Retainage/Trust Fund. I was nervous the first time I ever attended Legislative Day, but if you do your research and share real accounts of how these issues are affecting your business, you will be amazed the type of impact you can have."

In 2015, more than 100 ABC members filled the offices of legislators to testify and educate them about construction business issues, the importance of having certain bills passed and more. The goal is to have the elected official review the material. We also try to have ABC members attend committee meetings to testify in front of the committee—thus putting real life experience in front of the Legislature.

"It doesn't matter how long you have been an ABC member, if your business is feeling the impact from an issue that your local legislators can help change, you should be present on Legislative Day," said Russell Hamley, ABC Greater Houston Chapter President.

To learn more about Legislative Day and to register, contact your local ABC chapter. ➔



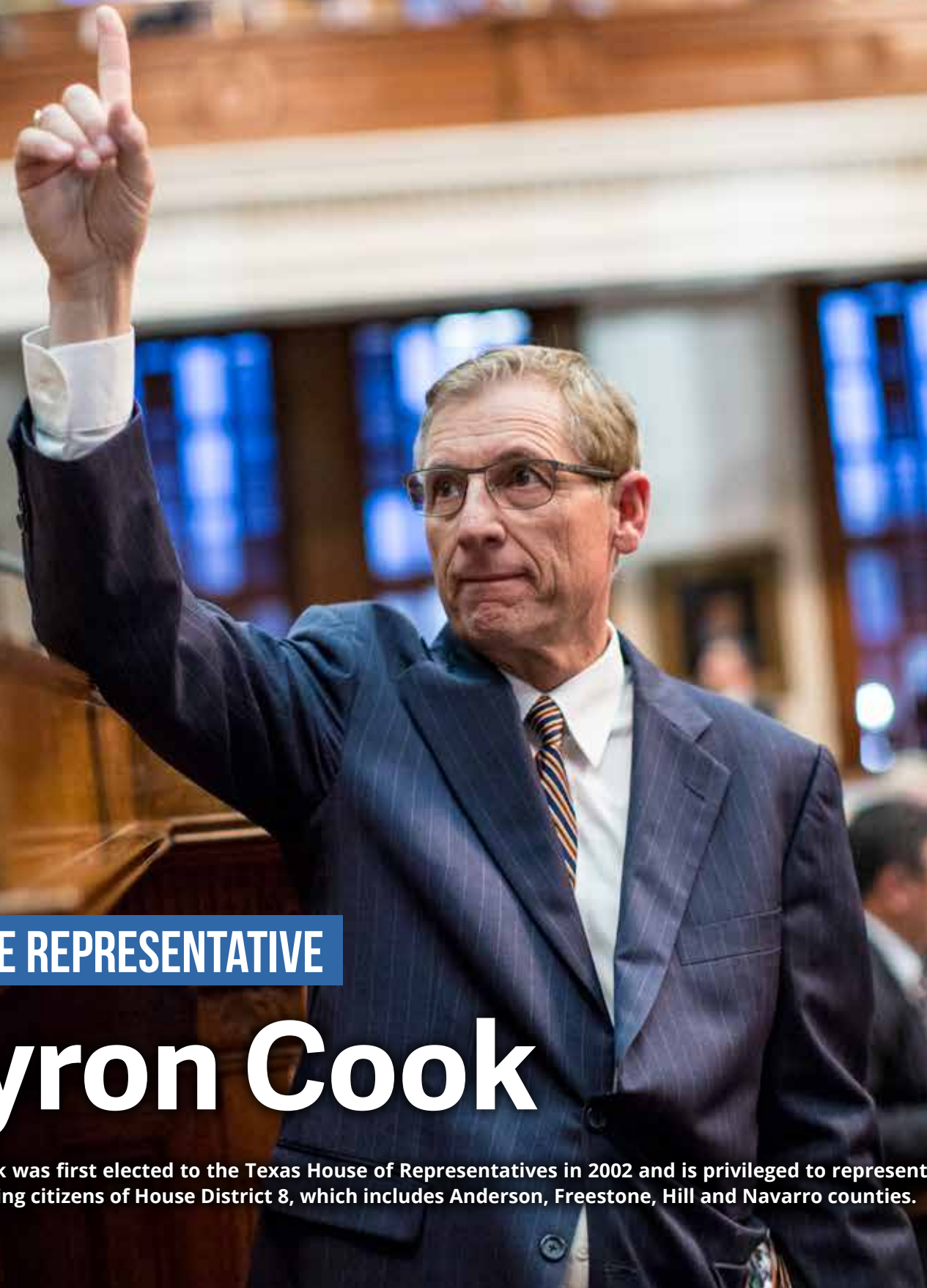
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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Byron Cook

Byron Cook was first elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 2002 and is privileged to represent the hard-working citizens of House District 8, which includes Anderson, Freestone, Hill and Navarro counties.

At the beginning of the 84th Legislative Session, Representative Cook was re-appointed chair of the House Committee on State Affairs for the third time. The committee has a diverse and broad jurisdiction over a myriad of critical issues to our state including: right to life matters, utility regulation, the management of state agencies, immigration and the administration of state government. He continues to serve on the House Calendars Committee, of which he has been a member since 2009.

He has previously served as chair of the House Committee on Environmental Regulation, the House Committee on Civil Practices and as the vice-chair of the Local and Consent Calendars Committee.

Cook also served six years on the Sunset Advisory Commission, a 12-member body responsible for the periodic review of the functionality and efficiency of state agencies. This tenure gave him a unique insight into preserving resources to address the critical needs of the state, and furthered his commitment to judiciously allocating taxpayer dollars. He authored and passed legislation that helped the state recover over a half-billion dollars in previously uncollected alcohol and tobacco tax revenue. For his leadership on this landmark legislation, then Texas Comptroller Susan Combs presented Cook with the 2014 True Texas Hero Award.

The Corsicana and Navarro County Chamber of Commerce presented Cook with the prestigious Tom White Citizen of the Year Award in 2015. This is given annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution through a demonstrated commitment to the highest community ideals and service.

Some other leadership awards that he has been honored to receive include the "Courageous Defense of Life Award" and the "Defender of Life Award" presented for his work and advocacy on numerous pro-life legislative initiatives. Moreover, he was honored with the Patient Advocacy Award from the Texas Medical Association and was recognized by the Republican Party of Texas for his leadership in their "Texas House Debt-Busters" program.

A businessman and rancher, he and his wife, Kay, live in Corsicana and have two daughters. Both daughters graduated from Texas A&M University, and their oldest daughter is married and has a son and a daughter.

Please describe your business background.

Having been an entrepreneur all my professional life, I have been fortunate to be involved in a lot of interesting companies. Primarily my background is in starting one of the first companies that created software for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Spending a better part of 20 years in that industry gave me the opportunity to work with folks all over the world, including Japan and Europe.

What is your view of the free enterprise system?

Free enterprise is the foundation of the capital system and of this country. It is extremely important to have people who are willing to risk their time, energy and assets in businesses. A robust free enterprise system provides for critical job creation.

You have chaired one of the most important committees in the Texas House, the House Committee on State Affairs, since 2011. What is the most challenging aspect of chairing this committee?

The committee has purview over a number of extremely important pieces of legislation that potentially affect countless lives; moreover, it receives a significantly high volume of bills. Having the opportunity to serve as a member of the committee since 2003 and as chair since 2011, I believe it is critical for a chairman to have the patience to listen to all the diverse points of view and work with all parties to craft good public policy.

Believing that government should allow industry experts to come up with solutions before getting involved, I consistently encourage groups to work together to come up with solutions when there are competing positions. It is important for policymakers to facilitate striking a balance that would be in the best interest of our state.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the state this upcoming session?

Lawmakers must immediately work to improve the state's ability to properly address the protection of children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Recent data from Child Protective Services indicates that the agency is struggling to address vulnerable children in a timely manner.

There is immense room for improvement on how we can make our school finance system more effective and efficient. The reality of the fact is that we need to ensure Texas has a well-educated and motivated workforce. One of the key foundation pieces is ensuring we provide a quality education to prepare these kids to be successful in life.

Legislators must address the need for more transparency in elections; otherwise we leave the opportunity for loopholes for a growing number of entities to anonymously manipulate and control our elections, which undermines the democratic process. President Ronald Reagan remarked in a 1988 Legislative and Administrative Message to Congress entitled: A Union of Individuals, "The right to free speech and the right to participate in the democratic process are two of our most fundamental freedoms. In *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Supreme Court held that limits on how individuals spend their own resources in the political process can violate the First Amendment. This is a sound principle. We should make sure 'campaign reform' will not have the effect of reducing popular participation in the political process or impairing constitutional rights. Today, there are proposals to restrict certain parts of our electoral process. A more beneficial reform would be the requirement of full disclosure of all campaign contributions, including in-kind contributions, and expenditures on behalf of any electoral activities."

Our members are increasingly concerned about the effect many federal changes will have on the ability of organized labor to make inroads into Texas. What do you suggest businesses do to avoid a more hostile business environment due to increased activity by organized labor?

For the past two sessions, I have supported the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Texas' "Neutrality in State Government Contracting" bill, which prevents government agencies from requiring (or preventing) the use of project labor agreements in construction when state funds are involved. The legislation helps to prevent the spread of bad ideas that have made other states less competitive, unnecessarily increased the cost of construction and wasted taxpayer dollars. With the change in the administration in Washington, I am hopeful the assault on business will be abated. We can hold the line at the Capitol, but Texas businesses need to be vigilant on the local level since many local governments are not as conservative.

Is there anything else you want to share with our membership?

ABC's industry and membership are exceptionally important to this state because they are constructing the infrastructure and building capital improvements that are extraordinarily important to this state's future. Additionally, ABC members are responsible for so many superior quality and high paying jobs, on which Texas needs and depends. I hope, as policymakers, we discharge our duties in such a way as to make sure they have an environment where business can flourish. When businesses flourish, the people that work for them enjoy the quality of life that comes with it. 📌

Wishing you a happy and prosperous

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ELECTION RECAP

BY MIKE TOOMEY

There was never a dull moment this election cycle and Election Day was equally full of shock and awe. At around 2 A.M. on November 9th, 2016, the Associated Press finally called the last swing state and Donald Trump was named President-Elect. Republicans continue control of Congress with a majority in both the House and the Senate. What that means for Texas, only time will tell.

Across the state there were a few upsets, surprises, and nail-biting races that came down to just a few votes. In what is considered the only swing congressional seat, Congressman Will Hurd (R-San Antonio) was able to fend off Democrat and former Congressman Pete Gallego, 48% to 47%, respectively.

Four incumbent Republican House members fell to challengers. Rep. Kenneth Sheets (R-Mesquite) lost to Democrat Victoria Neave by 828 votes. Rep. Rick Galindo (R-San Antonio) was ousted by former State Representative Philip Cortez 48% to 51%. Rep. Gilbert Peña (R-Pasadena) suffered a heavy loss to former State Representative Mary Ann Perez, with Perez claiming 60% of the vote. Finally, special election winner Rep. John Lujan (R-San Antonio) lost to Sen. Carlos Uresti's brother, Tomas Uresti, 45% to 55%.

Although most of the local Harris County races fell to Democrats, Rep. Sarah Davis (R-Houston) was able to prevail with 54% of the vote. In the Dallas area, Rep. Linda Koop (R-Dallas), Rep. Cindy Burkett (R-Sunnyvale) and Rep. Matt Rinaldi (R-Irving), were all able to hang on to their seats in hotly contested, close races. Rep. Rodney Anderson (R-Grand Prairie) had to face an election re-count with Democrat challenger Terry Meza. After all accepted provisional ballots were counted, Meza had lost by only 64 votes. This close of a race prompted Meza to request

a recount from the Secretary of State's office. The recount confirmed Rep. Anderson as the winner.

Dr. Dawn Buckingham was able to secure former Sen. Troy Fraser's seat with 72% of the vote. Dr. Buckingham will join former state representative Bryan Hughes and Sen. Borris Miles as the newest members of the Texas Senate.

Republicans also swept all state-wide races, with Wayne Christian (R-Center) handily winning the race for Railroad Commissioner, and of the three seats up for grabs in both the Texas Supreme Court and Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, all went Republican.

The Texas House will have 26 new freshman members. Additionally, there will still be a special election triggered by the resignation of Rep. Dawnna Dukes (D-Austin) who has already declared she will resign before the 85th Legislature. Now that the last chips have fallen into place this election cycle, 20 Republicans and 11 Democrats will enter the Texas Senate, and 95 Republicans will meet 55 Democrats in the Texas House, securing a Republican majority for each chamber. Even so, not everything will remain at the status quo: the Texas Senate has lost 2 committee chairmen, and the Texas House has lost 9 committee chairmen. 📌

About the Author

Mike Toomey is the longtime ABC of Texas lobbyist and has the distinction of being the only individual in Texas history to have served as chief of Staff for two Texas Governors. He is a former State Representative from Houston and was voted in Texas Monthly magazines "Top Ten Legislators". Mr. Toomey is a strong supporter of Tort Reform in Texas and is widely acknowledged as one of the most respected and effective lobbyists in the State of Texas.



Central Texas celebrated its Texas State University Student Chapter receiving the Construction Management Student Chapter of the Year award at the ABC National Leadership Week.

Central Texas Chapter

The members of Central Texas recently celebrated the chapter's 40th anniversary at downtown's JW Marriott to highlight their industry's exemplary safety and project quality performance in 2016.

The evening kicked off with ABC's focus on safety and training, honoring several members who received the local and national Safety Training and Evaluation Process (STEP) awards for 2016. This year, eight ABC Central Texas members were recognized as "Best of the Best" in safety: American Constructors, BCS Concrete, Beckett Electrical, Harvey Cleary Builders, JE Dunn Construction, Lasco Drywall, Slater Painting, and White Construction.

The annual "Excellence in Construction" (EIC) awards banquet honors and recognizes ABC member companies who exemplify the highest quality of workmanship in their projects, while upholding a dedication to building projects on time and on budget. This year, 12 member firms, representing 20 projects totaling over \$485,000,000 received the association's prestigious EIC Eagle Awards. Two of these members, JE Dunn Construction and TDIndustries, received "Best of the Best" level recognition for surpassing the judging threshold with the two highest scoring projects.

The chapter's annual OSHA Partnership Safety Rodeo was a tremendous success again this year, training 200 people in the areas of Fall Protection, Electrical Safety, Aerial Lifts, Respiratory Protection and Ladder Safety at the one-day safety training event, co-hosted by OSHA and ABC Central Texas. The OSHA Safety Partnership program continues to grow, with over 25 chapter members participating, and more currently in the application process. In 2017, the OSHA Partnership meetings will be located once again at the Austin office of ABC Central Texas.

State Representative John Cyrier was on hand to induct the incoming 2017 ABC Central TX Board Members and Officers at the Chapter Dinner at County Line Barbeque on November 10. Rep. Cyrier was positive regarding the outlook for growth in our area, but cautioned that we need to remain in collaboration with other affiliated business organizations in order to continue

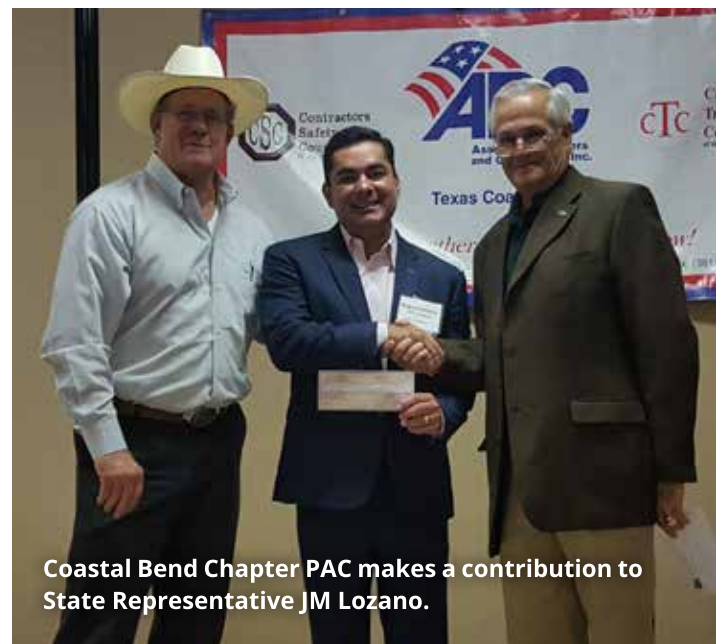
to be the voice of the industry in Central Texas.

At the annual ABC National Leadership Week in Dallas, the chapter was honored to celebrate its Texas State University Student Chapter receiving the Construction Management Student Chapter of the Year award at the event's awards luncheon. The award reflects the Student Chapter's accomplishments in programming, community service, communications/publications, and interaction with its sponsoring ABC Chapter during the academic year.

Texas Coastal Bend Chapter

Currently the Texas Coastal Bend chapter is gearing up for 2017! They are currently working on the Board of Directors Planning Conference where members come together to discuss strategies regarding membership, member services, fundraisers, political goals and many other aspects of the chapter for the New Year.

In the past few months, the chapter had several monthly luncheons and mixers. Luncheon topics ranged from a candidate forum for local candidate elects to providing an



Coastal Bend Chapter PAC makes a contribution to State Representative JM Lozano.

update on the economy with a presentation from Anirban Basu, Chief Economist for Associated Builders and Contractors. The monthly mixers are always a great opportunity for members to network and socialize. The most recent sponsors were Fishbone Safety for the month of August, the September mixer was sponsored by Rabalais I & E Constructors, and held in conjunction with our Skeet and Trap shoot. The October mixer was sponsored by Titan Pipe and Supply and November was sponsored by Fields, Nemec & Co.

In September, the chapter held the 15th Annual Skeet and Trap Shoot, another successful event. Money was raised for the PAC and the John "Jocko" Taylor Scholarship Fund. Mark Roach with Dealers Electrical and Robert Parker with Repcon, Inc., along with the Skeet Committee, worked tirelessly to organize and coordinate the details for the event. Thank you to all of the sponsors, volunteers and participants for your support.

The chapter also made PAC contributions to several candidates in the area, including JM Lozano, State Representative; Justice Greg Perkes of the 13th Court of Appeals; Mike Pusley, Nueces County Commissioner; and Jim Kaelin, Nueces County Sheriff. Thank you to all of the elected officials!

In an effort to promote ABC and the political issues that affect the industry, the chapter's Young Professionals have made a commitment to get more involved in the process and become familiar with the issues by setting forth a goal to have a more hands on approach. The Young Professionals have been

working to offer individuals within the committee an opportunity to attend the ABC State Legislative Day in February 2017 as well as the ABC National Legislative Day in June 2017. Funds were raised through the Bowling Tournament and Raffle. Expect to see the Young Professionals in your offices next year!

Greater Houston Chapter

As the New Year settles in, the Associated Builders & Contractors of Greater Houston (ABC) Chapter and Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation (CMEF) are busy preparing to make 2017 an even bigger and better year.

The first agenda item for the chapter and its members will be to utilize their voices at the upcoming Legislative Day in Austin, Texas on February 21, 2017. After raising \$73,360.86 to support their PAC's goals, and endorsed elected officials, 36 out of the 41 ABC Greater Houston endorsed candidates we re-elected to office. The Greater Houston Chapter is now focusing on having their voice heard in Austin during the ABC of Texas Legislative Day.

2016 was a stellar year for the Greater Houston Chapter with many goals being achieved. The chapter exceeded the 2016 growth goal of 503 members. The chapter also partnered with more than 40 area high school campuses to provide industry recognized NCCER Curriculum Modules to students, awarded 88 members with Safety Training and Evaluation Process (STEP) Awards, provided \$20,000 in scholarships to deserving budding young professionals, drastically increased participation within their young professionals committee, hosted over 400 high school students at Construction Careers

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Expo, and established their first full apprenticeship program—it's safe to say 2016 was a productive year for ABC Greater Houston and CMEF.

With Warren Adamson of S&B Engineers and Constructors, Ltd. at the helm as the 2017 ABC/CMEF Chairman of the Board, the sky is the limit for the Greater Houston Chapter. After hosting their annual planning conference in October, where more than 40 ABC members met to discuss the chapter's future direction, ABC Greater Houston established their 2017 strategic goals. ABC Greater Houston and CMEF have set strategic goals surrounding the areas of health and safety, political advocacy, membership growth and workforce development for 2017.

"ABC Greater Houston ended 2016 with our largest membership base in over 20 years. We made inroads on workforce development establishing relationship with EHCMA and strengthen relationships with C3 and Upskill Houston focusing on workforce. My hope is that we can use the strength of our membership and the alliances with these associations to gain significant progress in workforce development to meet the needs in our area both in industrial and commercial construction trades," said Warren Adamson, of S&B Engineers and Constructors, Ltd.

The Greater Houston Chapter is aiming to not only increase membership by five percent in 2017, but continue fostering relationships with groups such as the Greater Houston Partnership, C3, EHCMA, and HBR in an effort to fix the looming skilled-labor workforce shortage the industry is facing. For their November Membership Breakfast, ABC Greater Houston hosted more than 300 construction industry professionals at the Marriott North Hotel for an expo and breakfast with the opportunity to listen and engage with Peter Beard, Senior Vice President of Regional Workforce Development at Greater Houston Partnership (GHP); Chuck Gremillion, Executive Director of Construction Career Collaborative (C3) and Roy Watson of Chevron Phillips Chemical who serves as the Chairman of the EHCMA Workforce Development Steering Committee.

Along with fostering relationships, ABC Greater Houston and CMEF will continue providing more industrial and commercial

training programs to close the skills gap, provide members with resources to improve their safety performance, support high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) and college construction related programs, and make strides in the political arena with their local Political Action Committee. ABC Greater Houston members have much to look forward to for the upcoming year.

To learn more about the ABC Greater Houston Chapter and Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation visit www.abchouston.org.

Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

Each fall sees ABC Texas Gulf Coast in full swing, from the annual membership event to the 32nd Annual Golf Tournament. Planting seeds, creating opportunities, and cultivating the future workforce are just a few of the activities that make fall a time of good harvest at ABC Texas Gulf Coast.

At the end of October, ABC Texas Gulf Coast and their educational affiliate, Merit Shop Training, Inc. partnered with local industry to host the 10th Construction Exhibition at Brazosport College. Approximately 315 students from six area high schools participated in the event. Students were bused to the site and after donning safety gear and assessing for potential hazards, they participated in hands-on craft demonstrations and competitions designed to introduce them to career paths available in local industry and construction.

ABC Texas Gulf Coast members pulled out all the stops for these kids and were terrific mentors. Stations were set up for safety, carpentry, insulation & sheet metal, scaffolding, hand tools, power tools, pipefitting, HVAC, electrical, heavy equipment operations, and more.

Students were then allowed to operate machinery, use tools, and do hands-on activities to learn about job opportunities, hearing testimonials from members currently working their fields. The presentations were impactful, and there is no doubt that many of the kids will become apprentices to the masters presenting their crafts.

Approximately 3,000 people came out to Southeast TX Chapter's 23rd Outdoor Extravaganza/Member Trade Show.



A survey given afterwards revealed their favorite part of the day was interacting with the craftsmen and learning about the career options presented, and when asked if the event was worth attending, the answer was a unanimous "yes"!

In September at the annual membership event and luncheon, excellence was rewarded with thirty ABC Texas Gulf Coast members receiving STEP awards. Freeport LNG's Senior Vice President of Operations Mark Mallett delivered the program detailing the ongoing capital projects in the area giving valuable insight into the business opportunities generated by these projects.

The Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament followed, and with their best poker faces on, many members tried their hands at winning. The following week found members networking and visiting exhibits at the October Shrimp Boil. After enjoying a great meal together, members teamed up for ABC Texas Gulf Coasts' 32nd Annual Golf Tournament held at The Wilderness Golf Club. Cool fall weather made for a great day on the course!

Texas Mid Coast Chapter

The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter has recently directed focus to developing member safety programs, collecting ABC of Texas PAC funds, increasing member benefits, encouraging future workforce and developing a stronger community presence plus much more!

The following is a summary of chapter accomplishments:

- STEP (Safety Training Evaluation Process) participation within the Chapter has increased by 60%. Awards will be announced at the 34th Annual Installation of Officers and Awards Banquet to be held on Thursday, January 19, 2017.
- This year, the Chapter exceeded the ABC of Texas PAC goal thanks to the generosity of: Mike & Kim Weaver, JR and Amy Hartman, Stephen & Kandi Turek, Scott & Kathy Lewis and Corbin Lauger.

- On August 11, the Chapter proudly sponsored the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Conference at the Victoria College Conference & Education Center. There were numerous speakers that updated community leaders on projects and planning for the Mid Coast area.
- \$10,000 Night was held on September 15 at Greek's 205. Members enjoyed networking, great food and adult beverages as well as \$10,000 that was split among Tony Knebel (First State Bank), Ken Lester (Lester Contracting) and Manny Villareal (Atzenhoffer).
- In September, the chapter held the election of 2017 Board Members. Aarin Wendt of Wendt Electrical was welcomed to the Board. Thank you, Bill Johnston of Lauger Companies, for your service to the industry and many hours of support of the Chapter.
- Another NCCER Construction Site Safety Technician course started on October 4. This program will span over 5 months and will earn each student 7 NCCER safety certifications!
- The 7th Annual Dove Hunt was held on October 12 at the Hartman Family Ranch. Special thanks to everyone who participated and especially the Hartman



PAC donors from the Mid Coast Chapter

Family for allowing the chapter to use the beautiful ranch and facility, home of the VCS Companies.

- On November 3, the Chapter hosted a Membership Appreciation Dinner. Guests attended from Workforce Solutions of the Golden Crescent, VISD, Victoria Business & Economic Coalition, University of Houston Victoria and Victoria College. Each organization briefly announced services offered to the community and how the Chapter has partnered with them to enrich the programs. The Chapter is investing in students' lives to prepare them to be successful construction professionals and future leaders.



The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter is proud to support the commercial and industrial construction industries in Bee, Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Lavaca, Refugio and Victoria Counties.

South Texas Chapter

The monthly membership retention tools – Breakfast Club and Social Hour – have also become great recruitment tools. With the variety of members and chapter leaders in attendance, it's a great opportunity to help grow the chapter. As an added inducement to attend the monthly Social Hour, a drawing is held for a \$100 gift card. In order to be eligible you have to attend a committee meeting during the month and be present to win. If the person is not present, no one wins. The next month the amount is up to \$200. This "progressive drawing" is now up to \$500!

Apprenticeship enrollment increased significantly over the 2015/2016 school year by almost 50%. As construction activity is expected to increase in 2017 the trend should continue for the 2017/2018 school year. Also, the chapter held its annual apprenticeship graduation in September. Chapter Chair Desi Valdez and Contractors Apprenticeship Trust Chair Steve White (AmeriCrane) recognized these new journeyman craft professionals. The annual Local Craft Competition was held in November. Open to all third and fourth year apprentices, the competition determines who could be representing the South Texas Chapter at the National Craft Competition in 2017.

The chapter conducted its second "Construction Industry Tour" for high school counselors and teachers this past October.

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Tour stops included an architectural firm, two subcontractors' operations, a general contractor's offices, and an active job site. Thank you to RVK Architects, Marek Brothers Systems, TDIndustries and SpawGlass Contractors for your efforts to show the rewarding careers available to high school students.

Chapter events continue to surpass expectations. There were 37 boats in the October Fishing Tournament this year compared to 28 last year. In the November Sporting Clays Shoot, 53 teams competed this year versus 45 in 2015. Hopefully this trend will continue throughout 2017.

The bi-annual Judicial Candidates Reception was held in September providing ABC members the opportunity to meet the various judicial candidates and, more importantly, the candidates to learn more about the construction industry. Candidates for the Texas Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and various District Judges attended this year's reception.

Southeast Chapter

ABC-SETX hosts many member events year round, and the Construction Training Center conducts industrial craft training nightly, this past September and October were particularly busy. Due to the shortage of Welders in the petro-chemical industry, a portion of ABC-SETX's training dollars were allocated for the expansion of the existing Welding Lab. The construction of that expansion was completed in September 2016, now giving ABC-SETX's training center a total capacity of 88 Welding Booths. With this lab enhancement came new opportunities to not only train more students in the nightly Welding program, but to also offer a day Welding program through an articulation agreement with Lamar State College-Port Arthur.

Additionally, in late-September, the Construction Training Center, along with a few other member companies, participated in the 2nd Annual "Southeast Texas Youth Career Expo" held in Beaumont, where over 3,000 high school career & technology students from all over the area were bussed in. This event was a great opportunity to not only recruit graduating Seniors into ABC-SETX's training programs, but to also educate them about various career paths and the availability of good entry-level construction jobs within the petro-chemical industry of Southeast Texas. The students also attended interviewing workshops throughout the day designed to help fine-tune their job-readiness skills. Training staff was also able to set-up one of its "Welding Simulators" in the exhibit booth, and demonstrate to the students and teachers virtual simulations of the sights, sounds and dexterity of being a Welder; this hands-on, high-tech piece of equipment was a huge hit with everyone who stopped by the ABC-SETX booth!

To wrap up 2016, the Chapter hosted the largest members-only event of the year—the "23rd Outdoor Extravaganza/Member Trade Show". This year's "sold-out" show was held on Thursday, October 20th and it once again proved to be a huge success as well as a great networking/business-development opportunity for members. Approximately 3,000 people came out to Ford Park in Beaumont to support ABC-SETX and buy extra chances to win over 250 door prizes, 13 shotguns/rifles and 6 pistols. As always, a big thank you goes out to all members and sponsors who always support the Chapter each and every year!

TEXO Chapter

TEXO's mission is to unify, advocate and advance the commercial construction industry. A key goal of TEXO is to promote safety practices through awareness, training, safety initiatives and specific programming for commercial construction firms. The creation of the annual TEXO Construction Safety Professional (CSPD) Development Day is a reflection of its mission - unification and advocacy for safety professionals. Another TEXO goal is to promote the Safety Training STEP award. TEXO used the CSPD event as a way to encourage STEP chapter awareness and participation as well as publically recognize this year's STEP winners.

There are numerous safety conventions and conferences held throughout the US, but none held in the North Texas area on a yearly basis. TEXO's Safety Committee came together to develop a day where industry peers could come together for a full day of information that will help prepare employees for the challenges they may face. This day is designed to celebrate the safety professionals who are committed to ensuring a safe workplace to all employees on a daily basis and recognize STEP recipients.

The CSPD brings in guest speakers to one venue providing a day full of training in areas that may or may not be addressed during company/jobsite safety meetings or toolbox talks. CSPD is offered at no cost to TEXO member firms and their employees and at a minimal cost to non-members and provides both an efficient and valuable means of communicating safety within the industry. CSPD has something for everyone and all members from upper management to the field worker.

The CSPD event has been one of the most successful events put together by the TEXO chapter. It advances the goal of the association at the local level - Unify, Advocate and Advance. It advances the goal of ABC National because it betters the individual, the construction industry and the nation.

The development of the Construction Safety Professionals Day has led to a synergy throughout chapter members. Members have come together to recognize that safety is not a priority, safety is a culture. It takes a village to ensure that construction fatalities do not happen. TEXO is known for its commitment to safety; these practices contribute to its success.

"The CSPD is important and recognition worthy. Safety is not proprietary. TEXO created an avenue that brings together safety professionals from competing construction companies to network, share best practices and promote safety," said Melanie Laird, TEXO member & 2016/2017 ABC National EH&S Committee Chairwoman.

For more information on TEXO and the Construction Safety Professionals Day contact TEXO at (972) 647-0697. 📍



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