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King Amendment Soundly Defeated

Construction Employers Tout Prevailing Rate Wage Benefits

Washington, DC; November 5, 2015 – Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives easily defeated an amendment to the surface transportation bill offered by Rep. Steve King (R-IA-04) which would have repealed federal prevailing rate wage requirements for any projects funded by the bill. The decisive 188-238 bipartisan vote against the King Amendment was indicative of the value Members of Congress and their constituents put on Davis-Bacon prevailing rate wage requirements.

“Prevailing rate wage requirements have been the law of the land for over 80 years,” said Jack Jacobson, spokesman for the Construction Employers of America. “Davis-Bacon requires construction companies that contract with the federal government pay a wage that reflects local community wage and benefit practices to ensure employees can earn a living wage. Simply put, Davis-Bacon protects middle class employees.”

The Davis-Bacon Act was enacted in 1931 and is based on the belief that the government, as a major buyer of construction services, should not drive down wages in a community. Davis-Bacon prevailing rate wage requirements ensure that skilled workers on federal construction projects receive the locally prevailing rate wage and benefits. It also encourages employers to make investments in workforce training and development, and enhance workplace safety. A long series of reputable economic studies show that prevailing wage regulations do not increase government contracting costs. With the long-term “Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015” investing billions of federal dollars in thousands of local construction projects over the next six years, it is imperative that middle class families are paid appropriate wages that reflect their skills and quality work.

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The Construction Employers of America is a joint initiative to coordinate action on labor, workforce, and construction issues facing our industries. The charter members of the Construction Employers of America include the International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, the Mechanical Contractors Association of America, the National Electrical Contractors Association, the Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association, and The Association of Union Constructors.