

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rachel O'Grady, ABC, (202) 905-2104, ogrady@abc.org

ABC of Western Pennsylvania Celebrates Westmoreland County Decision to Eliminate PLA Requirements

GIBSONIA, PENNSYLVANIA, Feb. 24—In response to a lawsuit filed by the Associated Builders and Contractors of Western Pennsylvania, the Westmoreland County Commissioners have decided to repeal the county law that required contractors to execute a [project labor agreement](#) with the Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council as a condition of winning certain taxpayer-funded public works construction contracts. The commission's decision to terminate its PLA requirement allowed ABC of Western Pennsylvania to dismiss its lawsuit against the county today, as the plaintiffs have obtained everything that they had sought in the litigation.

"This is a clear and total victory for the merit-shop construction industry," said Pete Gum, president of ABC of Western Pennsylvania. "This decision will encourage fair and open competition on future Westmoreland County public-works projects and allow the more than 70% of Pennsylvania's construction workforce who don't belong to a union to compete to work in their own communities. Simply put, by eliminating PLA requirements, Westmoreland County is leveling the playing field for local contractors and ensuring that county taxpayers get the best possible public works projects at the best possible price."

The Westmoreland County PLA requirement would have compelled nonunion and union construction workers to join a specific union when working on a taxpayer-funded construction project, and required contractors to fire any worker on a PLA project who did not join a union affiliated with the Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council within eight days of employment, even if those workers belonged to a different union not represented by the council.

Studies on the effect of government-mandated PLAs in [California](#), [Connecticut](#), [New York](#), [Massachusetts](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Ohio](#) found that PLAs increase the cost of school construction by 12% to 20%. A [total of 25 states](#) have outlawed government-mandated PLAs on public-works projects.

Additional plaintiffs in the suit were Alex E. Paris Contracting Company Inc., Westmoreland Electric Services LLC, Lawrence Plumbing LLC, David R. Smith, Kirtus L. Rumbaugh, Joseph L. Corn, and Keith Impink. They represented the interests of employers and employees who choose not to join a union, as well as employees who belong to a union that does not belong to the Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council, all of whom were ineligible to work on the County of Westmoreland's construction projects in excess of \$150,000 under the previous law.

The successful lawsuit was brought by attorneys Jonathan F. Mitchell of Mitchell Law PLLC; Thomas E. Weiers of Thomas E. Weiers Jr. Esq.; and Wally Zimolong of Zimolong LLC, each of whom represented ABC of Western Pennsylvania and the other plaintiffs during the proceedings.

Associated Builders and Contractors is a national construction industry trade association established in 1950 that represents more than 21,000 members. Founded on the merit shop philosophy, ABC and its 69 chapters help members develop people, win work and deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members work. Visit us at abc.org.

###