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of Greater Kansas City

Feb. 6, 2017

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Dear Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee Member,

The Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee will hear HB 2185 regarding local option prevailing wage today.

As an association of corporations, unions, governments and educators, the Labor-Management Council of Greater Kansas City is well aware of the issues surrounding construction for public entities. We believe that public construction projects should be done in the most cost effective and safe manner possible. That's why we strongly support HB 2185, which would restore the ability of local governments to choose prevailing wage rules on projects they fund.

Independent studies, including one recently completed by UMKC, have consistently demonstrated that the prevailing wage law provides public bodies with the best value in construction. No evidence is available showing that a weak or nonexistent prevailing wage law will save taxpayers money, even on smaller projects or schools. Prevailing wage also fosters training and workforce development for local workers, building the community's economic capacity.

We understand that not every Kansas community would prefer to apply prevailing wage, even though the policy originated in Kansas. Each community should be able to make its own choice, as HB 2185 provides.

Many of our members are involved in public building projects throughout the state as contractors, workers and governments. Maintaining a high quality construction workforce and contractor base is vital for public bodies, for private sector developers and for local governments. Local governments should have the ability to pursue workforce development policies such as prevailing wage.

For the sake of local control, taxpayer value, the competitiveness of our workforce and the viability of our local contractors, we urge the committee to support HB 2185.

Thank you for your service to our state. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bob Jacobi

Bob Jacobi
Executive Director

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