

POLITICAL ADVOCACY

2023 Year in Review:

I would like to share with you all key highlights from my first year serving you:

- We have met with elected officials and have attended **61 events in person**. These relationships are key to building long-term future relationships for our issues.
- **We attended over 75 community events**—ranging from local chamber of commerce mixers, fundraisers and networking opportunities—to spread our merit shop philosophy.
- Personally met with and visited our members across Northern California to learn about their businesses and how the merit shop could better advocate for you.



ABC NorCal meeting with Congressman John Duarte.

In 2023, we have succeeded in advocating for the merit shop by explaining the follies of signing blindly onto a binding contract, which would restrict workers and contractors. We have also educated skeptical elected officials, who still have a semblance of independent thought in their minds. We cannot take outright credit for all these victories, and some of these efforts could still fall into PLAs being ratified. However, for the time being we have been able to hold the line, and preserve fair and open competition on local soil.

The following cities/elected bodies voted to establish PLAs, either citywide or on a project-by-project basis:

- Vallejo
- American Canyon
- Santa Clara Unified School District
- Mountain View
- Sacramento County airport expansion project
- Yolo County Board of Supervisors discriminatory/exclusionary apprenticeship policy
- Hercules
- Pinole



ABC NorCal staff speaking at Santa Clara Unified School District PLA vote.

The following elected bodies are open to negotiating fair/inclusive PLA language:

- East Bay Municipal Utility District

So how do we fight back? How do we ensure that our side is heard. Well, for one thing, more elected officials need to hear directly from us. They need to understand the risk to merit shop contractors when they sign a PLA.

When they listen and we talk, they understand. In the City of Vacaville, we talked to Mayor John Carli, who had just taken office. We explained the impact a PLA would have on his city's future development and housing. Even though he was supported by the unions in his campaign, he indicated he would consider not supporting a PLA, if it were brought up. He also encouraged us to take our message to as many public officials, chambers and audiences as possible.

We need to provide evidence of PLA failures, which we have been tracking since their onslaught. This evidence provides details that PLAs are often over budget, they result in limited bids and are ultimately non-compliant with local hiring and other promises they make.

Looking Ahead to 2024

Looking ahead into 2024, we will be unveiling our **F.O.C.U.S. Program**, which stands for **Fight, Organize, Counteroffensive, Unite, Strategize**. In the coming months, we will unveil the specific tactics we will take to help achieve our goals, which are to: Stop PLA's, educate the public about ABC, and to engage and grow our membership.

I am hopeful that, with your continued support and engagement, we will be able to elect the right candidates who will support our issues and, even more importantly, elect officials who will vote for their communities' best interests. At the end of the day, the ultimate losses that come from discriminatory policies, which end free and fair open competition, affect the workers in the community, who just want a chance to bid and build, and make their homes a better place.

2024 is our chance to turn that tide. I am even more excited to tackle it together than when I first started! Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to you!



ABC NorCal with Local Craft Competition competitors.