



## Elections and Consequences We Want



*General President Doug McCarron addressing members on the need to support carpenter-friendly candidates at the UBC Get out the Vote Conference*

Since the 2010 election there has been a steady assault on our livelihoods in states and at the federal level like we haven't seen since 1928. States have rushed to repeal prevailing rate laws and institute so-called "right-to-work" statutes. Project-labor agreements have been struck down. Funding for re-building our crumbling infrastructure has been stalled or slashed, and enforcement of basic safety and employment laws has been under attack. The net outcome has been an undermining of good-paying jobs for our members and their families.

Now we are seeing the **National Labor Relations Board** and **US Department of Labor** poised to issue [regulations](#) weakening joint-employer rules, making it easier for upper-tier contractors to get away with choosing law-breaking subcontractors and labor brokers. At the urging of Uber, Lyft and others gig businesses, states are stripping employment protections from workers dispatched to jobs by apps. A recent [article](#) by ProPublica disclosed the slow-moving train wreck that we have been warning policy-makers about for years. Budget cut backs are ruining the IRS' ability to collect taxes—taxes that would among other things pay for new bridges and schools.

It's time to flip the script. In September the UBC held a GOTV conference where staff and members learned about UBC issues and were given the tools to turn out the membership to vote. Of particular interest to this publication is advancing state legislation that automatically holds upper-tier contractors responsible for the wage and benefit theft by their subcontractors. That and other goals cannot be accomplished without us helping to elect carpenter-friendly candidates to public office.

## MN Contractor Arrested

**Ricardo Batres**, owner of **American Contractors and Assoc.** was [arrested](#) for labor trafficking, insurance fraud and theft by swindle. Batres worked for national homebuilder **Lennar Corp.** and others installing framing and sheetrock. Allegations against Batres include threatening to deport injured workers if they sought medical treatment, and cramming them into overcrowded housing without hot water.

"We see this kind of fraud occurring on a regular basis in construction throughout the upper Midwest and beyond," said **John Raines, EST for the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters.** "Some developers have routinely hired general contractors and subcontractors that exploit their workers by paying them off the books through labor brokers. The developers and general contractors who hired American Contractors and Assoc. have profited from the deplorable conditions that give rise to human trafficking."

Batres is being prosecuted by **Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman.**

## Gig Work Not the Future We Want

Uber, Handy and others are urging law makers to throw away employee protections, saying that the law is standing in the way of the work of the future. If so, we are all in trouble. There aren't [many](#) gig workers and the pay is [low](#) and dropping.

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