

**Media Statement**

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Statement on Legislation to repeal Prevailing Wage Law

Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council legislative director Patrick “Shorty” Gleason issued this statement after the Senate Michigan Competitiveness Committee reported legislation to repeal the state’s prevailing wage law and remove its reference from other statutes:

“It’s a sad state of affairs and a real slap in the face for Michigan workers across the state when a Senate committee can gut a 50-year bill in the span of 90 minutes or less without any meaningful form of due diligence. On top of that, it’s a complete disregard for the working class when you tie \$75,000 in appropriations that in no way can be reversed. Michigan legislators have stuck it to the working class in a way that we could never have imagined.

“To say that those in favor of repealing prevailing wage are dangerously naïve about the construction trade is a major understatement. Quite frankly, it is irresponsible for Michigan’s leaders to consider the creation of an environment that incentivizes less training; less safety; less health care; less retirement care; and less interest in the skilled trades as a career choice.

“The model in place now delivers a quality, safe construction project on time and on budget. The need for health care, retirement care and training are very real concerns for us, and the financial burden to pay for those benefits should not be passed on to the hard-working taxpayers of Michigan.

“This is not a union vs. non-union issue. It’s a quality of life – and workmanship – issue. We invested \$42 million in skilled trades training this past year and have plans to spend more in the future. This legislation, however, rips the heart out of our budget and places real limitations on what we can afford to spend.

“MITA (Michigan Infrastructure Transportation Authority) executive Mike Nystrom hit the nail on the head: Can you imagine an established company with an experienced workforce trained to build a finished project in a safe, timely and efficient manner that pays competitive wages for skilled labor at an industry-accepted level, competing against a company that pays minimum wage to its employees to take on the challenging and often hazardous duties of being a construction worker? The skill and expertise needed to build these sophisticated projects deserve to be paid a fair, industry accepted wage.”

The Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council supports the interests of nearly 100,000 construction workers in the state of Michigan.