

News Release



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For Immediate Release

Missouri's Construction Business Climate Ranks 34th According to ABC's Merit Shop Scorecard

Kansas City, MO, Dec. 2 – Missouri can improve its appeal as a state for contractors to do business according to a scorecard launched today by Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). “Building America: The Merit Shop Scorecard” reviews and grades state-specific information significant to the success of the commercial and industrial construction industry. The scorecard website, meritshopscorecard.org, identifies states, such as Missouri, where strategic improvements need to be made to create an environment where merit-shop contractors are well positioned to succeed and states that have created contractor-friendly business environments.

The Merit Shop Scorecard grades states on their policies on project labor agreement (PLA) and prevailing wage mandates, right-to-work status as well as their construction job growth rate, commitment to developing a well-trained workforce, level of flexibility in career and technical education curricula and use of public-private partnerships (P3s).

“Missouri policymakers have enacted some merit-shop friendly policies, but still have room for improvement in creating a business environment where contractors can excel,” said ABC Heart of America Chapter President Michele Roberts-Bauer. “Prohibiting Project Labor Agreements on state projects that receive more than 50% of their funding from the state has helped contractors by restoring open, fair & competitive bidding on certain public-works projects. However, Missouri policymakers can further reduce the cost of public construction to taxpayers and make it easier for contractors to expand their operations and create more jobs by banning government-mandated project labor agreements on all state funded projects.”

The merit shop philosophy is the belief that people and companies succeed based on free enterprise principles within the free market system, which is characterized by open and fair competition and diverse participants. Those who adhere to the philosophy believe employees and employers have the right to determine wages and working conditions through either individual or collective bargaining, as they choose, within the boundaries of the law. They oppose violence, coercion, intimidation and the denial of the rights of employees and employers. Furthermore, they believe it is incumbent upon all branches of government

to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars and that government should award contracts based solely on merit to the lowest responsible bidder, regardless of labor affiliation.

High-performing states such as Arizona, Louisiana and Virginia received top marks for their right-to-work policies and opposition to PLA and prevailing wage mandates.

The Merit Shop Scorecard was developed with input from ABC chapters and industry stakeholders across the country. States were evaluated based on their policies and records on seven key issues:

- Project Labor Agreements (PLAs)
- Prevailing Wage
- Right to Work
- Public-Private Partnerships (P3s)
- Workforce Development
- Career and Technical Education
- Job Growth Rate

Criteria and definitions are available on meritshopscorecard.org. The scorecard will be updated with exclusive state construction unemployment rate estimates from economist Bernard Markstein, Ph.D.

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Associated Builders and Contractors Heart of America Chapter is a Kansas and Missouri trade association representing commercial and industrial construction and construction-related firms who are dedicated to providing the Heart of America with high-quality, affordable, safe and on-time construction.