

Open Letter about Mitt Romney's record as governor of Massachusetts

By FRANK CALLAHAN
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I am sure that many of you share my frustration at trying to sift through campaign commercials and talking points to find out where the candidates for president really stand on issues that are important to you. Part of the problem is Mitt Romney's habit of changing his positions to suit his audience.

One thing he can't change is his record. I had a front-row seat for Romney's term as governor of Massachusetts. His positions and his actions on the issues that have a direct impact on building and construction trades workers were not good for our members.

Wages: Romney filed legislation to eliminate the prevailing wage on broad

segments of public construction projects. Romney vetoed a minimum wage increase just two years after promising to support raising it in his campaign. Romney vetoed legislation to stiffen penalties on employers that cheat workers out of their proper wages.

Unemployment insurance: Romney filed legislation to reduce the number of weeks you could collect benefits, made it far more difficult for construction workers to be eligible for benefits and cut premiums to the point of jeopardizing the financial health of the unemployment fund.

Construction safety: Romney vetoed a bill to require a 10-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training on public projects. Romney said it "would in-

crease the cost of doing business for contractors," even though they are only required to maintain a copy of a worker's OSHA 10-hour card. Ironically, this was one time when Romney brought the Democrats and Republicans together when members of both parties in both the House and Senate voted unanimously against Romney and overrode his veto.

Apprentice training: Romney tried to eliminate the state Division of Apprentice Training in his first state budget. He tried to undercut the division's funding every year after that.

Candidate Mitt Romney often changes his positions to suit varying segments of the electorate. On issues impacting building and construction trades workers, he has been consistent.

Candidate Romney has vowed to repeal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage, ban project labor agreements and pass anti-union "right to work" for less laws. This is one area where Romney's rhetoric matches his record. As governor of

Massachusetts, every time Romney had a choice between supporting workers' interests and the interest of Big Business, he chose Big Business every time.

Please keep this in mind when you cast your vote on Nov. 6.

Painting contractor Siegner and Co. gets safety award

The Joint Safety Committee of the Signatory Painting Contractors Organization (SPCO) and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 5 presented its Contractor of The Year Safety Award to Siegner and Company.

The award is based on overall safety record, participation in safety committee meetings, and for companywide innovation in safety programs. The company also maintains an innovative internal safety rewards program to encourage employees to make jobsite safety a priority.

Siegner and Company reported no citations or on-the-job accidents among its workforce of more than 40, for the award period.

"The commercial and industrial painting industry has become more complex in regards to safety and training issues," said John Kirkpatrick, director of the SPCO and District Council 5 Joint Safety Committee. "Our priority is the safety of our workforce and the safety of our jobsites. Not only do we contend with fall protection issues on scaffolding, ladders and lifts, but also the coating products that we use require safe handling and disposal. Worker safety for confined spaces and respiratory protection are also significant priorities. Our OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)-recognized Joint Safety Committee provides leadership for all of our contractors in developing and maintaining strong safety programs. This year, Sieg-

ner and Company's safety record stood out as exceptional."

Siegner and Company was chosen for the award from among union painting contractors in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

SPCO is an association of contractors that employ union labor. The organization has been recognized for its emphasis on contractor safety and is a past recipient of the Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) Award for an association.

For more information go online to: www.spc.org.

...Union-built airplanes

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U.S.-made aircraft. Of the seven biggest airlines:

- **Southwest and Alaska:** 100 percent Boeing 737s.
- **American:** 100 percent Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas.
- **United:** about 80 percent Boeing, 20 percent Airbus
- **US Airways:** about 75 percent Boeing, 25 percent Airbus
- **Delta:** About 66 percent Boeing, 33 percent Airbus
- **JetBlue:** 0 percent Boeing, 100 percent Airbus for larger flights, and Brazilian-made Embraer craft for smaller.

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