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Majority party again guts local control

Madison, WI – Representative Christine Sinicki (D-Milwaukee) commented about committee passage of Assembly Bill 24, which may come to the Assembly floor for a full vote and has already passed the Senate:

“On Thursday, Republicans in the Assembly Labor Committee insisted on passing AB 24, which forbids local governments from requiring Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) in public works bids. PLAs are pre-hire agreements that can establish terms and conditions of employment for specific projects, such as requiring that public works projects be done by local workers.

“Despite the plain fact that few of our local governments ever use a PLA, Republicans act like this is a big problem that needs fixing. To fix this big, non-existent problem, they insist on passing AB 24 that will preempt municipalities’ autonomy over their own public works projects. And this in spite of several municipalities asking the Legislature to preserve their right to use PLAs in the future.

“Thus AB 24 is another Republican attack on local control, though it may actually be a by product of their desperation to show how tough they still are on organized labor. They resent that the cost and time efficiencies gained using PLAs often occur with the help of unions. Unions’ highly trained and organized workforces provide the readymade partners that contractors look for to assist them in meeting their goals in PLAs.

And the majority party still needs to show Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) and Americans for Prosperity (AFP) that they are following the playbook, which still includes the line item “squash unions” ([both groups logged their support for the bill](#)). Governor Walker [included the same](#) proposal in his budget, so eager is he to show that he, too, can check ‘I’m-still-tough-on-labor’ off on his WMC and AFP report cards.

“In their desperation to show they’re the toughest guys in the Capitol, Republicans show instead they are clueless about how local governments could use a tool like PLAs to make public works projects a good value for the taxpayer, and a source of jobs for local workers. The majority party pays lip service to those goals, but turns around and votes to undermine them. Wisconsin’s working families deserve much, much better.”

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