

# Biden's Anti-Competitive "Big Union Double-Whammy"

BY DANIEL HOGAN

*Daniel Hogan is the Chief Executive Officer of The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC). Hogan is dedicated to helping member union contractors increase their market share in the ultra-competitive construction and maintenance industry.*



On February 1st an opinion piece ran in Fox News entitled "Biden's big union policies are a double-whammy to my small business," by contributor Mario Burgos. In it, Mr. Burgos laid out the economic and business issues that he claims are due to the Biden Administration. As an association of contractors, many of them small, we never like to see any business struggling, but blaming unions or President Biden for his troubles, is misleading and incorrect.

Firstly, Mr. Burgos opens with how between 2020 and 2022 his workforce shrank by 40% while the cost of materials rose by 36%. These numbers are entirely believable, however blaming unions or President Biden for the loss of work caused by a global pandemic, a workforce shutdown, and a stunting of the world's production and supply lines is entirely misguided. Nearly every industry can cite similar, or far more dire numbers. So, the stage Mr. Burgos is setting is off to a rough start.

However, he does get to his specific claims that President Biden's executive order for project labor agreements were somehow "anti-competitive" and prevented him from making his due comeback.

While referencing construction work in his home state of New Mexico, Mr. Burgos states "90 percent of construction workers in New Mexico choose not to belong to a union." So, at least he is acknowledging that not being "competitive" is their choice. Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) are a lot of things, but "anti-competitive" is not on the list.

In the United States, PLAs have been used in both the private and public sector for decades, and the competition between

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union contractors can be fierce. PLAs have become increasingly popular as a means of ensuring that construction projects are completed safely, on time, within budget, and with the highest of quality. For contractors, operating under a PLA is far more a symbol that your team is professional level and ready to compete.

PLAs establish safe jobsites and clear lines of communication between labor and management. They also ensure that workers are properly trained and equipped to perform their tasks, resulting in increased productivity and efficiency on the jobsite.

But we hear it all the time, "it's all about the money", even Mr. Burgos mentioned cost. PLAs provide a clear understanding of labor costs and work schedules, which helps contractors to better control their budgets and avoid surprises that can disrupt timelines or the bottom-line.

PLAs aren't "anti-competitive," they are the rules of the game when played at an ethical and professional level. They offer many benefits to the United States construction market, including increased efficiency and productivity, improved quality of workmanship, cost certainty, promotion of local hiring, support for diversity and inclusion as well as career development for obtaining the next generation of skill craft-

workers.

So, what is this "double-whammy" that Mr. Burgos is referring to? Not wanting to operate on the same high road level as other contractors or be clear in your training and expectations? Not wanting to pay fairly or offer your workers pensions and security? Not wanting to establish clear lines of communication or high standards of work?

PLAs help to ensure that construction projects are completed on time, within budget, and to a high standard of quality. The one thing that remains clear is that the only way PLAs are "anti-competitive" is as Mr. Burgos said himself, by choosing not to use one. ■