



Ohio Construction Coalition

“News Blaster”

February 1, 2006

In the face of pressure from OCC and others, OSFC releases Attorney General’s opinion that caused ‘pay-to-play’ shakeup

When the Ohio School Facilities Commission voted Jan. 26 to disclose an advisory opinion from the Office of the Ohio Attorney General, it did so, in part, because of actions taken by the OCC, a politician who supports the OCC and a media member with whom the OCC works. (The OSFC had used the opinion in December to justify awarding work to companies whose owners had donated to Gov. Bob Taft and other politicians.)

While most state agencies are prohibited under a 1974 law from awarding no-bid contracts to companies whose principals gave \$1,000 or more to the officeholder ultimately responsible for awarding contracts, the OSFC has never had to follow that law. But in December after it received the opinion, the OSFC voted to prohibit contracts worth \$500 or more from going to companies whose owners have given at least \$1,000 to Gov. Bob Taft in the two years preceding the contract.

The OSFC had declined to release the opinion, citing attorney-client privilege.

However, OCC representative Al Adams continuously pushed the OCC to release the opinion, as did state Sen. Teresa Fedor, whose actions included sending a letter directly to the OSFC. A reporter from the Columbus Dispatch, James Nash, whom the OCC has been sending its findings on school construction research, also pressed the OSFC for the opinion.

During the Jan. 26 OSFC meeting, Fedor went on to argue that the school facilities panel needs to study its own contracting practices. In particular, she questioned the commission’s approval of a \$3.9 million construction-trades contract to GM Mechanical Inc. of Covington for the Dayton school district. GM Mechanical had backed out of a previous school contract because it was unable to meet workers’ compensation and drug-free workplace certifications, and the state had to place GM on a payment plan to get back money it is owed.

For a copy of the opinion, contact Calvin Jefferson at BMA Media Group at cjefferson@bmamedia.com or 1-888-445-8255.

To schedule a formal presentation on the planned formation of a “stronger, more inclusive and improved” OCC for your industry group, organization or association, please contact Bob Verhoff, executive director of Union Construction Industry Partnership, at 440-366-4003.

The OCC asks that all those interested in the welfare of the state’s construction industry contact their local senators and representatives to make sure they have received and reviewed the OCC’s Prevailing Wage booklet! For copies of the booklet and more information, contact Calvin Jefferson at BMA Media Group at cjefferson@bmamedia.com or 1-888-445-8255. (An electronic version is available, enabling you to print the booklet whenever needed.)

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