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**Advocacy Digest | February 20, 2020**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Advocacy Group forms subcommittee to review contractor registration law**

Recently the WBA Advocacy Group approved the formation of a subcommittee to review the state statutes and administrative rules on contractor certification. The original law, 2005 WI Act 200, and was signed into law on March 27, 2006 by Governor Jim Doyle with the support of WBA.

It has been almost 14 years since this law was passed and the Advocacy Group thought that now was a good time to take an additional look at the law and administrative rules and report back at their next meeting on June 24. The newly created subcommittee will be headed by WBA Treasurer Cory Sillars.

Any member who is interested in serving on this subcommittee should contact Brad Boycks (bboycks@wisbuild.org) to take part in the conversation. We will be communicating online using Zoom for upcoming meetings so no travel will be necessary.

If the Advocacy Group concurs with any suggested changes to current law and administrative rules, they would be included in the 2021-2022 WBA Advocacy Agenda that will be considered by the WBA Board of Directors on October 1.

**Online silent auction to fund the BBW PAC in the works**

Another item discussed during the Advocacy Group meeting on February 7 was establishing an online silent auction to help fund the Building A Better Wisconsin Political Action Committee (BBW-PAC)

The Advocacy Group was supportive of this effort and we will be working to hold an online silent auction sometime this year prior to the November general election.

In order to have a successful silent auction we are asking for donations from members. We have already secured a donation that includes tickets to a Minnesota Wild NHL game from WBA Past President Ron Derrick (thank you!). Please consider contacting Brad Boycks (bboycks@wisbuild.org) to make a donation which can be anything ranging from prepaid gift cards, Packer tickets, gift certificates for items used to build a home, and electronics.

More details on this to come but please consider making a pledge to donate an item today!

**State Senator Tom Tiffany advance in GOP primary to replace Sean Duffy**

Voters in Wisconsin’s 7th Congressional District selected State Senator Tom Tiffany over Jason Church in the GOP primary on February 18 to advance to the general election to fill the open congressional seat created by Sean Duffy’s retirement.

Tiffany bested Church with 57% of the GOP primary vote and will face Democrat Tricia Zunker in the May 12 special general election. Zunker defeated businessman Lawrence Dale in the democrat primary election.

State Senator Tom Tiffany was supported in his primary win with funds from the National Association of Home Builder’s BUILD PAC (NAHB BUILD PAC).

**Building Codes Vote Marred by ‘Zombie Proposals’ Could Impact Housing Affordability**

For most of 2019, the International Code Council’s 2021 building codes cycle was moving along as expected, but a last-minute wave of newly registered voters appears to have derailed the online vote in what appears to be a concerted effort to impact the code development process.

NAHB was heavily involved at all stages in the current code development cycle, which includes changes to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the all-important International Residential Code (IRC) for the 2021 edition of the I-Codes. NAHB members and staff had a significant presence at both the ICC Committee Action Hearings in Albuquerque last May and the Public Comment Hearings in Las Vegas in October.

Through the deliberative and transparent hearing process established by the ICC, NAHB — along with a host of other advocates and stakeholders along all ideological lines — publicly influenced many proposals with testimony backed by data and relevant research.

When the vote results came in from the ICC’s Online Governmental Consensus Vote, held Nov. 19 through Dec. 6, 2019, it was as expected, with a success rate of around 84% on non-energy code proposals that NAHB either supported or opposed, in line with results from previous years. But when the preliminary results on the IECC were reported, there were some surprising discrepancies.

Many aggressive energy efficiency proposals that had been defeated at both the committee hearings and the public comment hearings had been approved by the online vote (preliminary results). When proposals are defeated at hearings, they must get a two-thirds majority to overturn past results. It’s a bar so high, no previous proposal had ever met the threshold. But in this code cycle, 20 IECC “zombie” proposals cleared the hurdle and came back to life. And some will negatively impact housing affordability for home builders and buyers.

The more egregious changes include:

* Gas water heaters, stoves and dryers need to be “electric ready,” with appropriate receptacles installed nearby if a homeowner decides to switch to all-electric appliances
* An electric vehicle charging receptacle (40A 220V) needs to be installed in all single-family homes with a parking space
* Wall insulation was increased to R-20+5 in climate zones 4 and 5
* Ceiling insulation was increased to R-60 in climate zones 4 through 8
* Ceiling insulation was increased to R-49 in climate zones 2 and 3

A preliminary NAHB analysis of the changes pegs the cost impact to be a low-end estimate of $2,400-$7,200 in climate zone 1, to a high-end estimate of $5,000-$14,000 in climate zones 4 and 5, for each new single-family home of average size.

With such inconsistent results, NAHB suspected that something was amiss with the voting. After reviewing the approved governmental voters, it was discovered that hundreds of new government employees from towns all over the country were validated to vote — and they voted in droves.

There was a concerted effort on the part of efficiency and environmental groups to engage like-minded governmental members who work in environmental, sustainability and resilience departments. These new voters appear to have worked off the same voting guide and simply voted their party line.

NAHB will be very actively pushing back on these zombie proposals. First, staff is appealing at least two of the results that they believe are related to proposals that are out of scope for the energy code. Also, NAHB will be challenging the voting credentials of a number of new members.

NAHB also intends to work with ICC to tighten up voting eligibility and modify the process to limit or eliminate proposals from getting approved that lose the first two hearings.

For now, read the results and know that NAHB is doing all it can to stand up for reasonable building codes that help build safe housing that is affordable.

For more information on the vote or the codes development process, contact Craig Drumheller (cdrumheller@nahb.org).

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