

NORTH ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

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CARPENTERS, MILLWRIGHTS ENDORSE KENNEDY FOR US SENATE

The North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters and the Eastern Millwright Council today endorsed Joe Kennedy for United States Senate. The announcement was made at the Carpenters Center, the union's regional headquarters in Dorchester, where Kennedy was joined by several dozen union members and toured one of the union's training centers.

"Congressman Kennedy has been extremely responsive and active on issues that directly impact the work and lives of our members and their families," said Tom Flynn, executive secretary-treasurer of the North Atlantic States Regional Council. "He understands what's important to us and has demonstrated how effectively he can work in Washington. He knows there are good careers in our trade and how important the construction industry is as an economic driver at the local, state and federal level."

"Throughout Congressman Kennedy's career, he has shown his commitment to working men and women time and time again. His understanding of the significance of America's unions make us confident in our endorsement, knowing that he will have our members and the working people's best interests at heart." said Robert Loubier, executive secretary-treasurer of the Millwrights union.

Kennedy thanked the Carpenters union for their support. "There are few fights more critical to this country today than for the hardworking families our economy has left behind," said Kennedy. "For generations, American unions have served as a firewall between workers and abuse, exploitation, and injustice. I'm proud to carry this fight in my campaign and to center the voices of working people in the weeks and months ahead."

Kevin Kelley, a council representative for Carpenters Local 339, which covers part of Kennedy's congressional district, on Kennedy's work on issues important to members.

"Life in construction is hard, especially on the body. I'd wager to say every tradesperson has at one point or another been injured to the point of being offered prescription painkillers, be it by a licensed physician or less qualified sources."

"The opioid crisis is devastating this country, but especially the construction trades. Even before they come to our apprenticeship program, we're finding opioids have taken ahold of otherwise promising young workers.

Those who have faced down the specter of substance abuse and come out on the other side live in ongoing recovery from their addiction.”

“Joe Kennedy has ALWAYS fought for those who suffer from substance abuse and other mental health disorders. This is a nationwide epidemic that requires voices in the senate who have seen its tragic effects across the country. Joe has spent the time to know this issue from the coalfields of Appalachia to the old mill towns of Massachusetts.”

“Three rank-and-file union carpenters also spoke at the event, touching on issues important to them and their union Brothers and Sisters.”

Keisha Campbell, a carpenter who lives in Stoughton and is a member of Local 327, on infrastructure spending:

“We build and maintain the roads, bridges, and tunnels used by millions of our neighbors every day. We need major reinvestment in our infrastructure to rebuild our roads and bridges. We need to update and modernize our energy infrastructure with offshore wind and solar. We need to protect our commercial ports and coastal communities and from rising sea levels with lock gates and sea walls. Our members are ready to go to work, but we need action from Washington. WE need JOE KENNEDY in the Senate.”

Jerry Arneaud, second-year apprentice carpenter from Randolph and member of Local 346, on apprenticeship training:

“Union apprenticeships remain one of the best pathways to the middle class, and the focus on safety and skill enhancement shows just how serious we are. However, there are those in Washington who have never put on a tool belt who think watering down apprenticeship standards and regulations will help our industry. To them I say “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!”. It’s unnecessary, unfair, and most importantly UNSAFE.”

“Our brothers and sisters need a fighter in the senate who will stand up to protect apprenticeship programs and industry standards.”

Carlos DeSouza, a Fall River resident and member of Wood Frame Carpenters Local 723 on construction industry payroll fraud:

“Our craft is one of the oldest in history and probably one of the first someone thinks of when you say you’re a carpenter. Sadly, our wood frame craft is probably the number one sector of the construction industry for cheating contractors who exploit construction workers.”

“I am talking about cash pay and misclassification that may be most common in wood framing, but now exists on almost all construction projects. The model is simple. General contractors hire sub-contractors who then hire (what we call) labor brokers to exploit a largely immigrant workforce through cash pay.”

“This “business practice” helps cheating contractors underbid law abiding union and nonunion contractors by as much as 30%. In the worst cases these practices have become associated with human trafficking. The cheating and exploitation of workers has become a cancer in the construction industry. Many of our leaders have chosen to not take this issue seriously. Joe is not one of them. Congressman Kennedy has stood with us on the line to protest and bring light to this issue from day one. “

In October, the North Atlantic States Carpenters union hosted a forum for Kennedy, Senator Ed Markey and Shannon Liss-Riordan. The event was held at the union's main training center for apprenticeship and skills upgrade training in Millbury and attended by several hundred apprentice and journey level members.

The North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (formerly the New England Regional Council of Carpenters) and the Eastern Millwrights Regional Council are each affiliates of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC or Carpenters union).

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