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Letters | City Council correct to take on the unions

Kudos to Philadelphia City Council for stepping up and recognizing the need to open public construction projects to minority and open-shop contractors who pay taxes in Philadelphia but have been shut out of working here ("Council's union challenge a gamble," Dec. 9).

Most people are unaware that unions represent a minority of employees in the construction industry, nationally and in Pennsylvania. Nationwide, construction industry employment is 85 percent open shop and 15 percent union. In Pennsylvania, it is 80 percent open shop and 20 percent union. These numbers discredit self-serving assertions by the building trades unions that open-shop contractors are untrained, unsafe, unskilled, and unable to provide quality construction services.

By denying open-shop and minority contractors an opportunity to work on public construction projects in Philadelphia, the city is discriminating against the majority of construction employees in the area. This has reduced competition and results in increased construction costs for taxpayers.

City Council's action to eliminate long-standing discriminatory construction practices that benefited a select few at the expense of minority and open-shop contractors is long overdue and should be applauded by every taxpayer in Philadelphia.

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