



**International  
Union of  
Operating  
Engineers**

# DAVIS-BACON PREVAILING WAGE

## What's at stake in 2020?

Joe Biden's plan will enforce, protect, and extend the Davis-Bacon Act if he is elected President. This key labor law for Operating Engineers will reach more projects, and a Biden Administration will invest more in infrastructure than any past president. He has been outspoken in support of Davis-Bacon prevailing wages.

President Trump's Republican platform continues its opposition to Davis-Bacon prevailing wages. Despite making repeated requests of President Trump to publicly express his support for Davis-Bacon prevailing wages, contrary to the stated policy of the platform, he has been unwilling to do so. Trump's platform says:

*"We renew our call for repeal of the Davis-Bacon law, which limits employment and drives up construction and maintenance costs for the benefit of unions."*

### Current Prevailing Wage Survey vs. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data

A Trump appointee in the White House authored a sneaky plan to slash Davis-Bacon wage rates by as much as 60% by changing the way the prevailing rate is calculated – without any congressional involvement. They would change the way Davis-Bacon wages are surveyed within the US Department of Labor. They would shift away from the method used today at the Wage and Hour Division to a new approach used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). There is only one reason they want to do this – lower blue-collar workers' wages on construction! The new BLS survey method contains no benefits – no contributions to pensions or health care are included in their prevailing-wage calculation. And wages are dramatically lower. Cuts on the check vary from location to location, but, generally, they are 30% lower than current survey levels in most areas. The Trump Administration could cut Davis-Bacon in the dead of night.

What does this sneaky change in the way prevailing wage rates are calculated do to Operating Engineers' pay on highway projects around the country? Check it out:

City & State	Davis-Bacon (Highway) Total Package	BLS Total Package	Reduction in Wages
Des Moines, IA	\$45.90	\$26.85	-\$19.05
Duluth, MN	\$56.64	\$29.96	-\$26.68
Las Vegas, NV	\$68.87	\$25.56	-\$43.31
Pittsburgh, PA	\$57.83	\$27.68	-\$30.15
Madison, WI	\$64.42	\$33.33	-\$31.09
Grand Rapids, MI	\$67.06	\$21.05	-\$46.01

Comparison of current BLS rates vs. current DB wage determination rates as posted on [beta.sam.gov](http://beta.sam.gov) (10/1/2020)