

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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[ruranga@quadc.org](mailto:ruranga@quadc.org)***Construction workers get payout in \$1.1 million wage theft case***

Long Beach, CA — More than a hundred workers who helped build Browning High School in Long Beach received restitution checks from the California Labor Commissioner in a \$1.1 million prevailing wage theft case against San Diego-based general contractor T.B. Penick & Sons, Inc. and its subcontractor, Newport Beach-based Champion Construction.

Champion Construction, a metal stud framing/drywall subcontractor, stole wages and money from workers' benefit plan, instead pocketing the money.

"I applaud the work of the Labor Commissioner's Office for cracking down on cheating contractors and bringing justice to workers," said David Kersh, executive director of the Carpenters/Contractors Cooperation Committee. "Using workers to game the system strips them of their rights, hurts honest contractors and robs taxpayers."

The head of Champion Construction, Sid Evans, has a long record of civil and criminal activity. He was previously convicted of workers compensation premium fraud and has two felony cases pending including one in Orange County, where prosecutors are charging him on 35 felony counts of forgery and embezzlement by contractor.

The Contractor's State License Board had also previously disciplined him by revoking his ability to be a qualifier on a contractor's license.

Along with the Browning project, he stole workers' wages on other projects, including the Cambria Hotel in El Segundo and senior housing in Santa Ynez.

"I couldn't pay my bills and I had to move in with my brother," said Jose Lopez, a former Champion worker who received a restitution check for his work on Browning. With the commissioner's action, he said, "The people that abuse workers should be alert that it's not going to be so easy now to exploit workers."

In addition to T.B. Penick, other major general contractors that have worked with Champion include Deacon Corp., R.D. Olson Construction Inc., ProWest Constructors and Suffolk Construction Inc. They have all been impacted negatively by this subcontractor's irresponsible and unlawful practices.

"We hope this case, as well as a new law making general contractors liable for their subcontractor's labor violations on private projects, will serve to deter wage theft practices on construction sites," Kersh said. "If the general

contractors that used Champion had taken the time to check its record, they would have probably realized they were bringing onto their job a problematic company.”

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***ABOUT THE QUAD C:*** *The Carpenters/Contractors Cooperation Committee is a labor-management committee that promotes quality construction jobs in the Southwestern United States through vigorous labor compliance efforts. Known as Quad C, the Committee monitors construction projects for compliance with labor, tax, insurance and safety laws.*