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Contractor Pays Penalties And Back Wages

July 03, 2001

A New Jersey drywall contractor has paid \$18,000 in civil penalties to the Connecticut Department of Labor and \$51,422 in back wages and interest to 122 workers, the New England carpenters' union announced Monday.

Nearly all the workers who were owed back wages were Latinos, who quickly are becoming a major labor source in the drywall business, said Matthew Capece, a lawyer for the New England Regional Council of Carpenters. The union helped the workers file complaints with the state.

P&B Partitions of West Berlin, N.J., had failed to pay overtime and pay for all hours worked, Capece said. Many of the workers were treated as subcontractors, not employees, he said.

"Construction companies do that to avoid paying overtime, workers' compensation and Social Security," Capece said.

No one could be reached for comment at P&B.

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