

## VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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# Unions are building a strong city

June 4, 2015

**M**anhattan: Errol Louis' June 2 column "The casualties of the 421-a feud" made a few important and factual errors which I thought were extremely important to correct.

According to a 2013 study by the Economic Policy Institute, the actual number of black unionized workers is 21.3%, which is significantly higher than the 13% cited in the column. In fact, it's in the non-union construction sector where blacks are severely underrepresented (13.8% according to the EPI study). Furthermore, a Columbia University study on the Building Trades' Edward J. Malloy Construction Skills pre-apprenticeship program reported that almost 90% of the enrolled youth are black, Hispanic or Asian, with 100% coming from the five boroughs. This program represents the future of the trades as they will soon be apprentices and then full journeymen and women.

The BCTC takes great pride in its effort to diversify the trades over the years primarily through initiatives like our pre-apprenticeship program, which is a strong indicator of the future makeup of the unionized construction industry. Unfortunately, the real demographic makeup of the unionized trades and the role of unions in facilitating this didn't make it into Louis' column. *Gary LaBarbera, president Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York*

