

## A Law Called Davis-Bacon...It Builds Our Middle Class

*It's not dinner table conversation, but it helps put dinner on the table. The U.S. Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 is a tried-and-true policy that prevents federally-funded construction projects from driving down local area wage standards.*

- With the Davis-Bacon Act, a prevailing wage is determined for local communities based on the existing economy and local wage rates. The prevailing wage is rarely as good as what LIUNA members or other union workers earn, but it does prevent federally-funded projects from driving wages down—and equally prevents artificially inflating wages.
- The law protects communities and employers by keeping the wage standards of low-wage areas from being imported into high-wage areas, or visa-versa. The law protects rural and urban areas, and all workers, union and non-union alike.

*For generations, the Davis-Bacon law has protected taxpayers and workers from low-ball contractors who try to compete by undercutting workers' wages.*

- Davis-Bacon doesn't just help the workers who build our country support their families—it makes sure that taxpayers get their money's worth. By preventing contractors from winning public work with low-ball bids that undercut workers' wages, it encourages the best contractors to do public work and compete based on quality.
- Numerous studies show that projects built with Davis-Bacon prevailing wage provisions are more likely to be completed on time, preventing costly delays. Davis-Bacon projects are more likely to be completed within budget and with fewer future repair costs. Studies also show that workers are more productive when they are well-trained and experienced—qualities that Davis-Bacon projects attract.

*Some industry groups and politicians have tried to dismantle Davis-Bacon protections, but they are in the minority and on the losing side.*

- There have been many attempts to dismantle the family-supporting provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act over its long history. These attacks typically come from corporate groups seeking to drive wages below community standards in order to increase profits, all at the expense of the workers who build those projects, the taxpayers who finance them and communities which rely on them.
- But most elected officials—including Republicans, Independents and Democrats—as well as many industry associations, support the benefits the law provides. After efforts led by LIUNA, family-supporting Davis-Bacon provisions have been enforced in recent large federally funded projects, including nearly \$286 billion in highway funding, and in the U.S. House reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. And while President Bush tried to strip Gulf Coast communities of the law's protections in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a bipartisan coalition forced him to back down.