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**Good Jobs Building America Can Quickly Begin to Pull U.S. from Economic Crisis,  
LIUNA General President to Testify before Congressional Committee**

***“More Than Ever, Workers Need Paychecks, Not Stimulus Checks”***

**Construction Workers Union Calls for \$100 Billion Economic Stimulus Building  
Transportation, Energy, Education Basics That America Depends on Every Day**

**Washington, D.C. (October 29, 2008)** – In testimony today before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Laborers’ International Union of North America will call for a \$100 billion investment to stimulate our economy by building our nation’s transportation, energy and education structures that we depend on every day, but which have fallen into disrepair due to years of neglect.

“The construction industry is in the midst of the worst, most sustained downturn in 40 years. Unemployment among construction workers has nearly doubled since last year to 9.9 percent, with just shy of 1 million construction workers out of work – the highest level in recent memory,” LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan will testify. “This industry – a key driver of our economy – is in crisis.”

O’Sullivan will point to thousands of crucial ready-to-go projects which have been put on hold and which could quickly create more than 1 million jobs and revive our economy – unlike the tax rebate checks and Wall Street bailout enacted earlier this year.

“Each of these efforts was like using a can of Red Bull and a candy bar to fix the problem. They provided no lasting impact, left no sustainable jobs behind and did not provide tangible assets to taxpayers,” O’Sullivan will say. “More than ever, workers need paychecks, not stimulus checks.”

The construction jobs crisis is forecast to worsen in 2009. According to McGraw Hill Construction, the value of projects is expected to decline by another \$35 billion next year, on top of a \$140 billion plummet from 2006 to 2008.

O’Sullivan will note that construction jobs are “too good to keep losing,” providing family-supporting pay and benefiting the working class population hit hardest by the current economic crisis – and those whose renewed incomes would quickly spread through local communities and the economy. And such jobs would begin to address the nation’s deteriorating roads, bridges, dams, waterways, school houses and energy systems, leaving behind real capital assets for future generations.

“This is a no-brainer. We can help rescue our economy, rescue working America and leave behind real assets that will benefit our entire nation for years to come,” O’Sullivan will testify. “There is urgent work to be done, and Americans urgently need work.”

(more)

In every state there are urgently needed projects, ranging from transportation repairs and expansions to electrical grid upgrades to modernizing school houses. Currently, 26 percent of the nation's bridges are below standard, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, and roads in poor condition or over capacity cost the typical motorist more than \$1,000 a year in wasted gas. Children are crowded into more than 220,000 temporary structures, the Modular Building Institute reports. There are 3,650 unsafe dams or levees, according to the ASCE, and the Environmental Protection Agency reports that each year 850 billion gallons of sewage overflows due to broken or obsolete wastewater systems. Rolling blackouts and inefficiencies in the U.S. electrical grid cost an estimated \$80 billion a year, according to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

In addition, retrofitting public buildings to be more energy-efficient, would reduce carbon emissions and save taxpayers energy costs, while creating as many as 800,000 jobs, according to the Political Economy Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

As part of his testimony, O'Sullivan noted LIUNA's "Build America so America Works" campaign, an effort by the union to help make building America a national priority through ads, media outreach and member mobilization. As part of the effort, the Committee will see LIUNA's television spot "Build," which calls on Congress to invest in jobs that build America. The ad will air election night on cable stations in metro Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

O'Sullivan will tell the committee that, "LIUNA members and millions of working Americans like them are asking: If we can spend trillions to bail out Wall Street and give tax breaks to the wealthy, can we seize this moment, finally tackle these enormous issues and take care of America and its Main Streets for change?"

**Note: For state level statistics on the construction jobs crisis, state level build America job opportunities and needed investment, General President Terry O'Sullivan's complete testimony, or interviews with workers affected by the crisis, call 202-942-2246 or email [jhay@liuna.org](mailto:jhay@liuna.org).**

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*The members of LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – are on the forefront of the construction industry, a powerhouse of workers who are proud to build America. For more information on Build America so America Works, visit [www.LiunaBuildsAmerica.org](http://www.LiunaBuildsAmerica.org).*