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LIUNA Stands Apart in Presidential Endorsement Process

Major Democratic Hopefuls Make Their Case To be the “Build America” Candidate

In Person in Chicago and With First Live Union Webcast, LIUNA’s Half-Million Collective Bargaining Members Engage Candidates on Issues that Matter

Chicago (September 17, 2007) – Major Democratic Presidential candidates delivered remarks to members of the nation’s fastest-growing construction union today – simultaneously before about 1,000 union leaders in person in Chicago and before the union’s half-million collective bargaining members in a first-ever of its kind national webcast.

With the webcast, members were able to watch the candidates and offer online input to their union.

Candidates participating today included Senators Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards. Tomorrow, Governor Bill Richardson is scheduled to participate.

LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – is the most progressive, aggressive and fastest-growing union of predominantly construction workers in the U.S. The union has begun an intensive process of informing and engaging its members on issues, politics and the presidential candidates.

Members Say the Issue is Jobs and the Economy

The union has conducted national opinion surveys of members, has provided informational and educational tools to each of its more than 400 U.S. Local Unions and has put in place sophisticated tools to engage and garner feedback from members, such as the webcast, an email alert network of tens of thousands of rank-and-file members, a text-messaging system to alert and engage activists and targeted use of auto-dialing systems.

“Our members are telling us what they care about in their daily lives and it is jobs and the economy, health care, and retirement security,” said Terence M. O’Sullivan, LIUNA General President. “They go to work each day doing the hard, dirty and sometimes dangerous work of building America. They are searching for a build America candidate for president.”

No Rush to Endorsement

LIUNA has not endorsed a candidate for President in the Democratic primaries, where two-thirds of its voting members have historically made their votes.

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“Our goal is to engage our members – an army one-half million strong – so that they engage the candidates to speak to ‘build America’ issues,” O’Sullivan said. “We are not taking a rushed approach. We view this as a presidential race, not an endorsement race.”

In the coming weeks, LIUNA will step up its work with candidates to help them understand and reach out to its members, who are on the forefront of the construction industry – a sector that is a powerhouse of 10 million workers who produce 5 percent of the nation’s economic output.

Crucial to members’ concerns about the economy is the creation of good, family-supporting jobs both through policy that builds a strong economy and frees workers to unite in unions for better lives and through a renewed national commitment to invest in our country’s crumbling infrastructure.

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