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Marsden Introduces Jobs/Local Hiring Bill in VA Senate, Associated Building Contractors Testify Against It

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Senate Bill 703, introduced on January 22nd by newly-elected Senator Dave Marsden (D-Fairfax), was a local hiring bill designed to : 1) give preference to contractors that hire local residents; 2) keep construction jobs in Virginia; and 3) expand opportunities for working families in the Commonwealth. Its untimely death on February 3rd can be largely attributed to the strong opposition of the Associated Building Contractors, a trade group representing building contractors. The bill will be re-introduced again next session, as support grows in the wake of continued unemployment by many Virginia citizens.

SB 703 was intended to make it difficult for contractors to ship in low-cost labor from out-of-state in order to reap more profits, particularly labor from states further south where the wages are much lower. Profits-before- people has become standard operating procedure in the Virginia construction industry, taking away jobs from Virginia families who desperately need them and lowering wages across the board for the workers . Executives' compensation remains unaffected.

Stated Justin Meighan, Treasurer of the Laborers' International Union of North America's Mid-Atlantic regional office, "The ABC did what it always does: vote against jobs for hard-working Virginians and their families. They will do anything and everything to preserve their current practice of importing low-wage earning workers and to avoid paying a living wage to Virginia workers who are really struggling right now."

Currently, contractors that do their best to recruit locally and keep tax revenue in Virginia's cities and counties are not being rewarded for doing so (those that play by the rules are punished). Senator Marsden, a champion of working families, spoke out about the hard times facing the industry in Virginia and why we should pass this bill to put Virginia workers first.

A representative from the office of Governor Bob McDonnell also attended the hearing and spoke against the bill on behalf of the Governor, who is closely associated with the ABC and wants to protect their interests. Bob McDonnell made it clear during his campaign for Governor that he is not a friend of working families in Virginia, so it is no surprise that he would oppose any measure that would help Virginia's construction workers

At the suggestion of several supportive Democrats, the committee voted to carry the bill over to the next General Assembly session so that the bill can be written in more detail, successfully pre-empting the false arguments from opponents that killed the effort this session.

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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. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office represents Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Washington D.C., and West Virginia. Follow us on twitter at www.twitter.com/maliuna, and visit us on the web at www.malaborers.org. The social media version of this release is at <http://pitch.pe/45593>.