



LIUNA!

Feel the Power

Laborers' International Union of North America

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2017-2018

**LIUNA BUILDS
AMERICA**

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Across the country, we continue to witness the failure of our aging infrastructure, with bridges literally falling down, dams giving way, severe airport congestion, and highways unable to handle today's traffic. The American Society of Civil Engineers has scored America's transportation infrastructure at a D+ which is an unacceptable grade for such a vital component of the American economy.

LIUNA is pleased to see both President Trump and Congress make infrastructure a top priority calling for a \$1 trillion infrastructure investment package.

In 2015, Congress was able to pass a five year, \$305 billion highway bill, but it is not nearly enough. With an \$836 billion backlog in needs for highways and bridges alone, it is imperative that Congress find a way to fully fund long-term investments that are adequate to rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure.

LIUNA encourages Congress to pass an infrastructure package to rebuild the United States and create jobs across the country. LIUNA also supports a sustainable user-fee based funding mechanism for the Highway Trust Fund as well as other funding and financing mechanisms such as tax credit bond programs, Public Private Partnerships (PPP), repatriation of overseas corporate assets, and an Infrastructure Bank to help build America's infrastructure, as long as they include strong labor standards.

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

LIUNA supports a reasonable, rational, and fact based energy policy that is dedicated to building and maintaining America's energy infrastructure network. Across the country, LIUNA members work in every sector of the energy industry, including oil, natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, and pipelines. However, critical energy projects are being unduly delayed due to permitting battles, outdated regulatory procedures, dangerous and sometimes violent protests, and frivolous lawsuits.

Congress must unlock affordable energy by enacting rational policy that streamlines both the permitting and regulatory processes, and that gives all stakeholders a fair chance to participate, while ensuring the safe and responsible development of domestic energy sources.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Many of the nation's water pipes were laid in the early to Mid-20th Century and were only meant to have a lifespan of 75 to 100 years. The recent Flint water crisis is only one story of our failing water infrastructure. Congress must prioritize the need to repair our water infrastructure in communities across the nation. LIUNA supports the call that President Trump made during the campaign to triple funding levels for clean water and drinking water State Revolving Funds (SRFs). This critical investment will help states and local governments provide the necessary resources for water related infrastructure and will provide communities access to safe and affordable drinking water and wastewater systems. There must also be investment for other large scale water infrastructure projects.

Water infrastructure costs exceed \$270 billion. Therefore, LIUNA supports the establishment of a water infrastructure trust fund to help supplement the SRFs, and calls for water infrastructure funding to be included in the proposed \$1 trillion infrastructure investment package.

DAVIS BACON PREVAILING WAGE

Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage laws prevent cheap, low-road contractors from undermining the wages and benefits of workers on federally assisted construction projects. Prevailing wage laws take wage compensation rates out of the competitive bidding process on public projects. With uniform labor costs, contractors compete for public projects on skill, productivity, and management abilities, not on who can scrape together the cheapest workforce. Davis-Bacon not only provides needed stability in the construction industry, but it preserves the living standards of all construction workers and their families throughout the country.

LIUNA opposes any effort to repeal the Davis Bacon Act, including: H.R. 743—Davis Bacon Repeal Act, introduced by Rep. Steve King (R-IA); H.R. 4403—Fiscal Responsibility in Federal Contracting Act, introduced by Rep. Gosar (R-AZ); S. 195—the Transportation Investment Recalibration to Equality (TIRE) Act, introduced by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and S.244—Davis-Bacon Repeal Act, introduced by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT).

NO TAXES ON HEALTH BENEFITS

LIUNA health trust funds have provided medical, hospital, prescription drug, and other valuable benefits to hundreds of thousands of LIUNA members, their families, and retirees for generations. By trading wages for collectively bargained employer contributions to the health funds, laborers have always paid for their own coverage and are well aware of the costs of health care.

LIUNA strongly opposes any effort to tax laborers on their health care coverage, including any effort to repeal or cap the longstanding tax exclusion for “employer sponsored insurance” (“ESI”).

LIUNA also strongly supports full repeal of the so-called “Cadillac tax” that the ACA created. In reality, that is a 40% tax on laborers’ health plan coverage. Eventually every laborers’ health fund would be subject to the tax as health care cost inflation drives health plan costs above the tax thresholds in the law. Delay in the effective date of the tax to 2026, or any other year, is not enough to protect laborers and their families.

LIUNA opposes any taxes on workers’ health plan coverage and urges Congress to repeal the “Cadillac Tax” and oppose capping the health coverage tax exclusion.

PENSION REFORM—NO PBGC PREMIUM INCREASES

LIUNA is committed to ensuring the retirement security of our members and their families. Hundreds of thousands of LIUNA members depend on our union’s network of multiemployer pension funds. Unfortunately, Congress more than doubled the PBGC premium rates in the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act of 2014. Additional increases in rates would drive more employers out of the pension system and undermine the support of contribution-generating active workers who are, in effect, taxed three times every year by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC): once for themselves, once for inactive vested workers, and once for retirees.

LIUNA also strongly opposes some other destructive ideas for diverting resources to the PBGC’s unfillable hole including: “PBGC membership fees” imposed on every worker covered by a multiemployer pension fund; more surcharges on contributing employers; and per-member taxes on unions sponsoring multiemployer pension funds.

LIUNA strongly opposes any attempt by Congress to again increase the premium rates charged to multiemployer defined benefit pension funds by the PBGC. The per-head, annual premiums are a tax on laborers’ pensions. This tax diverts money from the laborers’ pension funds to the PBGC – a bankrupt, dying agency that cannot be saved by higher taxes on laborers and other workers.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

LIUNA was founded more than a century ago by proud immigrants and we continue to work for fair treatment of immigrant workers in this nation. But our country’s current immigration policy and its programs are failing both citizens and immigrants. Instead of passing comprehensive immigration reform which LIUNA continues to strongly support, there are some in Congress who want to focus on a deportation-only policy and the expansion of guest worker programs which are bad for the U.S. and immigrant workers alike. We will continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform and will not stop until it gets done. It is not only the right thing to do, but it is the necessary thing to do. LIUNA supports President Obama’s Executive Order known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which temporarily defers deportation for approximately 1.9 million eligible undocumented youth. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, LIUNA urges that the Trump Administration keep DACA in place.

LIUNA urges Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

GUEST WORKER PROGRAMS

The H-2B guest worker visa program allows employers to hire guest workers to fill temporary “seasonal” jobs. Construction is one of the top industries for H-2B workers. Many contractors that use H-2B falsely contend that they are unable to fill vacancies because they are jobs which U.S. workers are unwilling to do. This is simply not true. Employers often turn to the program to avoid paying U.S. workers fair wages, and instead turn to guest workers who they can exploit. The EB-5 visa program which grants visas to foreign nationals who invest in domestic construction projects is another problematic visa program. This program needs greater oversight and transparency and provisions to ensure that the jobs created through foreign investment have strong labor standards.

LIUNA opposes guest worker visa programs in the construction industry and urges Congress and the Trump Administration to make needed reforms to the H2B program or to remove construction workers from this broken program. LIUNA also urges Congress to either make needed improvements to the EB-5 program or to allow it to expire.

SO-CALLED RIGHT TO WORK

There have been recent proposals in Congress to advance national so-called right-to-work legislation. So-called right-to-work limits resources available to workers and undermines bargaining rights when negotiating for better wages and benefits for millions of working men and women across the country. It forces unions to represent individuals regardless if they are dues paying members, thereby significantly expanding the work load while limiting available resources. Workers in so-called right-to-work states make on average \$5,300 less per year than non-right-to-work states. Furthermore, the workplace death rate is 36% higher in right-to-work states. Simply put, right-to-work is designed to suppress middle class growth.

LIUNA opposes H.R. 785 and S. 545—National Right-to-Work Act, offered by Representative Steve King (R-IA) and Senator Rand Paul (R-KY).

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

LIUNA proudly represents over 25,000 Federal workers in more than 30 states across the United States. LIUNA's Federal employee members provide essential services for veterans and Native Americans, keep our skies safe, our parks clean, and protect us from threats both foreign and domestic. Federal employees have contributed over \$180 billion toward deficit reduction in the past several years through pay freezes and pension cuts. Federal workers' job security is still under attack through the current hiring freeze, efforts to severely restrict or eliminate official time for union representational activities and threaten due process protections, dues deductions, and retirement security and pay.

LIUNA calls on Congress and the Trump Administration to end these attacks on Federal employees.

POSTAL REFORM

LIUNA is proud to have the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) and its 47,000 members as an affiliate. Mail handlers are an essential part of the mail processing and distribution network utilized by the Postal Service to move more than 165 billion pieces of mail each year. NPMHU members work in all of the nation's large postal plants, throughout the Fifty States and Puerto Rico, and are responsible for moving, preparing, sorting, and containerizing the mail for distribution and delivery.

Proper postal reform legislation will provide fundamental updates and changes to the United States Postal Service and the hundreds of thousands of hard working men and women it employs. Moreover, this legislation is long overdue. The last time Congress was able to pass postal reform was over 10 years ago.

LIUNA supports H.R. 756, The Postal Reform Act of 2017, and urges Congress to pass this much needed legislation.

LIUNA—the Laborers' International Union of North America—is a strong and proud union of construction workers founded by immigrant workers in 1903. LIUNA members are on the forefront of the construction and energy industries. A half-million strong, we are united through collective bargaining agreements which help us earn family-supporting pay, good benefits and the opportunity for advancement and better lives. Chartered as a construction union, LIUNA is also one of the most diverse and effective unions representing public employees, federal sector workers, and service contract workers.

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