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General President of Largest Union of U.S. Construction Laborers Warns Senate Committee of Threats to Worker Apprenticeship Programs

“Our members and employers have gone from an infrastructure construction boom to an unpredictable series of project shutdowns.”

Washington, D.C. (Nov. 6, 2025) — Construction industry registered apprenticeship programs, a success story for workers and employers, are threatened by the chaotic and unpredictable actions of the Trump Administration, the leader of the largest union of construction laborers told a U.S. Senate Committee Wednesday.

“In the wake of public and private investment, the demand for apprentices has grown substantially,” Brent Booker, General President of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), told the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. “But that future is looking more uncertain.”

Booker cited several Administration actions that have halted major projects and led to chaos and unpredictability, a deterrent to both investment and the willingness of workers to meet the rigorous training requirements of becoming an apprentice and advancing to be a journeyworker.

“In construction, nothing kills work more than chaos and uncertainty,” Booker testified. “Chaos like cancelling \$24 billion of Department of Energy projects set to be built by skilled union apprentices. Chaos like cancelling major energy projects that are already 80 percent complete, chaos like cancelling major hydrogen hubs in Pennsylvania.”

Booker said that “in the last few years, our members and employers have gone from an infrastructure construction boom to an unpredictable series of project shutdowns. This type of chaos hurts the registered apprenticeship system.”

Registered construction apprenticeship programs are a proven path to life-long, family-supporting careers. Those who complete registered apprenticeship programs see earnings that

exceed associate degree holders by more than half, Booker told the committee. Those who complete the apprenticeship training, which is free for workers, earn on average \$84,000 a year.

“Completion of a union registered apprenticeship often provides a life-changing opportunity for those willing to undertake the challenge,” Booker said. He noted that shut down job sites and erratic government investment decisions lessen the likelihood workers will undertake that challenge.

“Maintaining the quality of the registered apprenticeship system is of the highest priority for LIUNA,” said Booker. Construction trades unions, partnered with industry contractors, invest \$2 billion a year in its 1,700 training centers and 20,000 certified instructors. The system “is what allows our union to deliver the skilled laborers required to complete essential construction for our country.”

With about 530,000 members, LIUNA is the largest union of construction laborers. Members currently work on highway and tunnel projects such as the Gateway in New York and New Jersey, the Frederick Douglass Tunnel in Baltimore, and renewable, nuclear and fossil fuel projects across the nation, as well as efforts to improve American waterways under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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The half-million 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 the U.S. and Canada.

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