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HEROES Act with Pension Protections Key to Pandemic Response and Recovery

Washington, D.C. (May 15, 2020) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement on H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES Act), which passed in the House today:

LIUNA commends Speaker Pelosi and the U.S. House on today’s passage of the HEROES Act, which will provide critical and necessary investments in response to the COVID-19 economic and public health crisis. This pandemic requires massive and forward-leaning policies and investments that address the emergency needs and resources that are necessary to rebuild our economy, our country, and the shattered lives of families everywhere. This extraordinary piece of legislation does just that.

The HEROES Act will help American families cope with the unprecedented challenges and risks to our financial and physical well-being as we continue to respond and recover from the pandemic. Key provisions in the bill include hazard pay to provide premium pay for essential workers, COBRA subsidies, an extension of unemployment insurance, additional OSHA funding, needed assistance to state and local governments, funding for the United States Postal Service, and additional financial assistance for individuals and dependent children.

The HEROES Act also provides critical and desperately needed pension reform measures that will stabilize the pensions of over one million Americans and eliminate benefit cuts. It also includes the GROW Act, which will provide a useful tool and possible option for defined benefit multi-employer pension funds to transition to a “composite plan,” if and when trustees deem necessary to protect and ensure the retirement security of their participants, retirees, and beneficiaries.

LIUNA urges the U.S. Senate to quickly pass the HEROES Act with the inclusion of the GROW Act provision to ensure that families across America receive the help they urgently need.

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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 America.