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Largest Union of Construction Laborers Announces Maternity Leave Benefit to Attract More Women to Construction Industry, Meet Their Needs

“So you don’t have to choose between being a mother and being a laborer.”

New Orleans, La. (Sept. 28, 2024) — The Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) announced at the Trades Women Build Nations conference today that it will implement the most expansive maternity leave policy in the unionized construction industry.

The annual conference, focusing on initiatives to meet challenges facing women in construction, attracted more than 5,000 participants, including more than 600 LIUNA members from 33 states.

“So you don’t have to choose between being a mother or being a laborer ... your union will now pay you \$800 a week for at least 12 weeks,” General President Brent Booker told attendees, referring to LIUNA members. “We’re looking to the future and we want all members, including female members, to know that we value them, we value their families, we value their children.”

Booker said the leave policy, to be implemented Jan. 1, 2025, is “an effort to bring more women into LIUNA and better the lives of the ones we already have.”

With more than more than a half-million members, LIUNA is among the largest and most aggressive construction trades unions in North America. Women in the union perform the same work as their male counterparts, including asbestos remediation, building and highway construction, and construction of energy infrastructure. Their union contracts ensure that they receive the same pay and benefits as their male co-workers.

“We all have unique stories of what brought us to our union homes,” Booker told the conference. “Some are stories of chance encounters, inspirational stories of escaping domestic violence, heroic stories of being the first woman on a construction job, opening a door to the future that will never be closed again.”

Booker also told the gathering that LIUNA is proud to be an activist union fighting to elect the Harris-Walz presidential ticket.

“Know anyone working on a highway? A bridge? A tunnel? A hospital? A school? A transit system? That’s because the Biden-Harris Administration [passed] the largest infrastructure bill we’ve ever had in this country ... which means there’s hundreds of thousands of women like you who will have the opportunity to have a rewarding career in the trades,” Booker said.

Just in his second year leading LIUNA, Booker has launched several other initiatives: the March to a Million to nearly double membership, Laborers Rising to further strengthen member activism, community involvement, and to ensure that every laborer has family-supporting pay, respect, and a safe jobsite.

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The more than 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 United States and Canada.