

LiUNA!

Feel the Power

**Laborers' International
Union of North America**

2018

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES





TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Across the country, we continue to witness the failure of our aging infrastructure, with bridges literally falling down, dams giving way, 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.

It is important that any proposal is robust, maintains a strong federal role and includes adequate safeguards and oversight. The issues surrounding our outdated and crumbling transportation infrastructure are not limited to a specific set of states. It is a national issue, and therefore must be addressed on the federal level.

LIUNA encourages the enactment of a federally funded 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. We are also supportive of including additional innovative financing proposals, including Public Private Partnerships, which we believe can help leverage resources to increase the amount of investments if structured correctly.

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, hydro, and pipelines. Critical energy projects, however, are being unduly delayed due to permitting battles, outdated regulatory procedures, frivolous lawsuits and sometimes dangerous and violent protests.

Congress must enact rational policies that streamline the permitting and regulatory processes to unlock the Nation's energy resources. LIUNA also strongly opposes keep it in the ground policies like S. 987, the 100 by '50 Act, introduced by Senator Markey (D-MA) and Senator Merkley (D-OR). Policies like this are unrealistic and will not only eliminate jobs and hurt working-class families, but will raise energy costs across America.

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 seventy-five (75) to one-hundred (100) years. Congress must prioritize the need to repair our drinking and wastewater infrastructure in communities across the nation. LIUNA supports the investments made into water infrastructure through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRFs). These critical investments help states and local governments provide the necessary resources for water related infrastructure and provide communities access to safe and affordable drinking water and wastewater systems.

LIUNA, along with a coalition of the nation's leading construction, engineering, municipal, public works, and manufacturing organizations, strongly supports the Securing Required Funding for Water Infrastructure Now Act (SRF WIN Act). The legislation utilizes the significant leveraging of Federal infrastructure funding established through the Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (WIFIA) Program to finance projects through the federal framework of the existing SRFs.

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 also preserves the living standards of all construction workers and their families throughout the country.

LIUNA opposes any effort to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, or weaken prevailing wage laws.

PENSION REFORM

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 for a retirement income that will last for their lives and the lives of their surviving spouses. Many billions of dollars in benefits have been paid by these pension funds over the past five decades. The pension funds' assets must be dedicated to funding pensions for retirees, future as well as present, and not be diverted to Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) premiums.

LIUNA is supportive of the bi-partisan legislation "Giving Retirement Options to Workers Act of 2018" (the "Grow Act"), HR 4997, introduced by Representatives Roe (R-TN) and Norcross (D-NJ). This bill is intended to give multiemployer plan trustees more flexibility and choice in designing pension programs that better fit their circumstances, including volatile investment markets, collective bargaining structures and competitive pressures. The GROW Act allows plans that are healthy today to make structural changes, if they choose, so they can continue to provide retirement security for American workers and their families in the years to come. LIUNA strongly opposes increases to the PBGC premium rate.

LIUNA urges Congress to pass H.R. 4997, the GROW Act, in order to strengthen and modernize the multiemployer plan system. LIUNA strongly opposes any attempt by Congress to again increase the premium rates charged to multiemployer defined benefit pension funds by the PBGC.

HEALTH BENEFITS

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

LIUNA applauds Congress for delaying the implementation date of the Cadillac Tax by two years to 2022, but Congress must fully repeal this harmful tax. The Cadillac Tax, created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), is a 40% tax on laborers' health plan coverage. Eventually, every single laborer will be forced to pay this tax because of how it is structurally linked to inflation. Furthermore, proposals to replace the Cadillac Tax with a tax on employer sponsored insurance (ESI) would have an even greater impact on LIUNA members and their families while also affecting the other 177 million Americans who rely on their ESI.

Finally, Congress is considering legislation to fund reinsurance programs in order to stabilize the health care market. LIUNA understands the urgency to stabilize the health insurance marketplace, but we oppose any effort that taxes our non-profit, self-insured healthcare funds to pay for reinsurance costs. LIUNA members were forced to pay over \$60 million because of the ACA's 3-year Transitional Reinsurance Program (TRP) fee. Bringing back any permanent form of this tax would be detrimental to our healthcare funds.

LIUNA opposes any tax on its collectively bargained healthcare plans.

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. LIUNA will continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform and will not stop until it gets done. Immediately, LIUNA supports continuation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which temporarily defers deportation for approximately 1.9 million eligible undocumented youth known as Dreamers. Dreamers came to the U.S. and made their lives here, and they and their families deserve a path to citizenship. LIUNA also supports legislation to allow workers covered by the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program to have a path to citizenship. In the past year, TPS has been terminated for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua and other nations. Over 300,000 workers now face deportation in the next twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. About thirty percent (30%) of TPS holders work in the construction industry. They build America every day and deserve a path to citizenship.

LIUNA urges Congress to pass legislation to support the Dreamers and to pass H.R. 4253/S. 2144, the SECURE Act, to help TPS recipients.

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 in which employers import H-2B workers. Many contractors that use H-2B visas falsely contend that they are unable to fill vacancies because U.S. workers are unwilling to do these jobs. In reality, employers often turn to the H-2B program to avoid paying U.S. workers fair wages, by using guest workers who they can exploit. The H-2A agricultural visa program is also being misused to hire construction and landscape workers from other nations to come to the U.S. even though that visa program is not supposed to be used for construction workers. Finally, the EB-5 visa program, which grants visas to foreign nationals who invest in domestic construction projects, is another problematic visa program that needs greater oversight and transparency, as well as provisions to ensure that the jobs created through foreign investment have strong labor standards.



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LIUNA opposes guest worker programs in the construction industry. LIUNA urges Congress and the Trump Administration to make needed reforms to the H-2B program or to remove construction workers from this broken program. LIUNA further opposes use of the H-2A agricultural visa program to hire construction and landscape workers. Finally, LIUNA urges Congress to either make needed reforms to the EB-5 program or to allow it to expire.

SO-CALLED RIGHT TO WORK

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 even if they do not pay one dime in dues, thereby significantly expanding the union's workload 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 thirty-six per cent (36%) higher in right-to-work states. Simply put, right-to-work is designed to hurt the middle class and take away workers' voices on the job.

LIUNA opposes H.R. 785 and S. 545 – the 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 thirty (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 \$19 billion toward deficit reduction in the past several years through pay freezes and pension cuts. Federal workers' job security is still under attack through efforts to severely restrict or eliminate official time for union representational activities; through efforts to eliminate due process protections, dues deductions, and retirement security; and through pay cuts.

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

POSTAL REFORM

LIUNA is proud to have the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) and its 38,000 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 twelve (12) 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.

905 16th Street, Northwest • Washington, DC 20006 • 202-942-2361 • www.Liuna.org



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