

TOOLKIT FOR LIUNA AFFILIATES

# FIGHT FOR THE BUILD AMERICA AGENDA

**Defend the Prevailing Wage**

[www.liuna.org](http://www.liuna.org)

**LiUNA!**

*Feel the Power*

# Contents

This toolkit provides materials for LIUNA affiliates to push back on the attacks on prevailing wages that LIUNA members and their families are facing at both the state and federal level. It contains sample materials to educate and mobilize LIUNA members. There are also materials for news media outreach and policy maker outreach; including talking points for members, contractors and leaders to address policymakers in hearings and meetings.

This toolkit is a jumping off point for your campaign. If you need guidance, additional materials or strategic advice to put the tools into action, you can reach out to LIUNA via email at [toolkit@liuna.org](mailto:toolkit@liuna.org).

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## **SECTION 1**

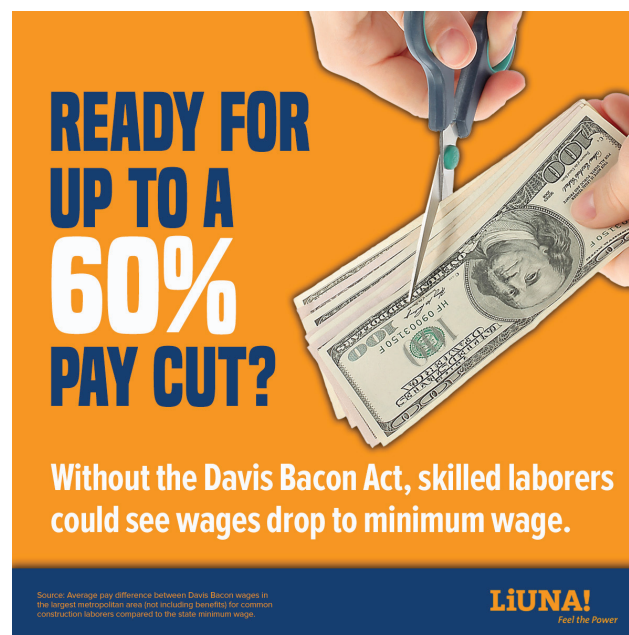
# **DAVIS BACON FEDERAL PREVAILING WAGES**



# Background

**Prevailing wage laws ensure that construction workers earn a fair day's pay and benefits for a fair day's work by setting a minimum wage rate for public construction investment.**

- There is a **FEDERAL** law, called the Davis Bacon Act that sets prevailing wage rules for federal construction projects, such as roads, bridges and federal buildings. (See Section 1 for materials on the federal Davis Bacon Act).
- Twenty-seven states have a **STATE** prevailing wage law that sets a minimum wage rate for most state-funded construction projects, such as schools and state office buildings. (See Section 2 for materials on state prevailing wages).
- On any given day, hundreds of thousands of LIUNA members are earning wages and benefits that are impacted directly or indirectly by the prevailing wage.
- Without these laws, LIUNA members would earn less, have fewer benefits and the entire construction industry would suffer.
- Irresponsible, low road contractors are pushing politicians to repeal the Davis Bacon Act and state prevailing wage laws nationwide.
- LIUNA is fighting back in the halls of Congress, in state legislatures and through the many rallies, events, and hearings that LIUNA members attend.
- Where state prevailing wages have been repealed or watered-down by changes to the rules, LIUNA members are pushing back by organizing aggressively and working to elect working class champions who will protect our livelihoods.



## The Davis Bacon Act Protects Paychecks and Taxpayers

The federal Davis Bacon Act has protected taxpayers and the paychecks of construction workers for generations by setting a local prevailing wage rate on federal construction projects based on a survey of actual wages, benefits, and training contributions paid in that community. Construction workers earn fair wages and benefits for their work on public construction and taxpayers can depend on higher quality construction.

### The Davis Bacon Act protects paychecks and allows working people to get ahead and prosper.

- The low road contractor groups who are pushing Congress to repeal or weaken prevailing wage laws are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.
- Prevailing wage rates support good jobs with career paths for workers in the construction industry because they take into account health, pension and training benefits—investments not made by low-wage contractors.
- Prevailing wage rates are local wages, based on a survey of actual wages paid for craft workers in the locality, which help all construction workers earn a fair day's pay and benefits for a fair day's work.

### Prevailing wages are good for the community.

- Prevailing wages strengthen the overall economy by supporting good local jobs and spending from those local jobs at local businesses, such as grocery stores, malls and gas stations.
- Prevailing wages prevent government spending from driving down local wages and living standards.
- Prevailing wages maintain standards for workers from all backgrounds and enable minorities to benefit from training and apprenticeship programs that open doors to opportunity in the construction industry.

### The Davis Act protects taxpayer dollars by keeping worksites safe and productive.

- Repealing the Davis Bacon Act would lower the quality of projects, and jeopardize worker safety on the job, leading to costly delays, accidents, and mistakes.
- Construction work is dangerous and without Davis Bacon it would be worse. An analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data on worker fatalities in construction bears out that states with weak or non-existent prevailing wage laws have a much higher incidence of fatal workplace incidents.<sup>1</sup>
- Lowering wages reduces on the job productivity. For example, a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.<sup>2</sup>

1. A Weakened State: The Economic and Social Impacts of Repeal of the Prevailing Wage Law in Illinois. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. [https://ler.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PWL\\_policy-brief\\_spreads041.pdf](https://ler.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PWL_policy-brief_spreads041.pdf)

2. Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. [http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing\\_wages/wages\\_productivity\\_highway.pdf](http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf)

# Leader Talking Points for Member Meetings, Testimony, News Media

## **The Davis Bacon Act protects paychecks for all construction workers.**

- Without a prevailing wage rate, LIUNA members could see their wage and compensation package plummet anywhere up to 60%.
- Davis Bacon prevailing wage rates aren't only for union construction workers. Wage rates are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers.
- Without the Davis Bacon Act, construction workers would earn less, and more families would need some form of public assistance to supplement their income.

## **Bottom of the barrel contractors are pushing repeal so that they can cut workers' pay and pocket the profit.**

- Responsible contractors understand that they are making an investment that helps their business succeed by fairly compensating a skilled and trained workforce.
- It's the irresponsible contractors who are eager to cut workers' wages who are pushing repeal.
- And, don't be fooled when low quality contractors pay less in wages, they do not pass savings on to taxpayers—they pocket the profits.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Davis Bacon Act protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built to the highest standards.**

- Prevailing wage rates include investment in training and apprenticeship programs which not only provide a career path for workers but also ensure that projects are built to the highest standards of quality.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads and bridges, there are more likely to be mistakes, workplace accidents, change orders, and cost overruns.
- Lowering wages actually reduces on the job productivity. For example, a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.<sup>2</sup>

1 Manzo, Lantsberg, Duncan, The Economic, Fiscal, and Social Impacts of State Prevailing Wage Laws: Choosing Between the High Road and the Low Road in the Construction Industry, February 9, 2016

2 Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. [http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing\\_wages/wages\\_productivity\\_highway.pdf](http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf)

# Business Manager Letter to Members

[Date]

## **RE: UP TO 60% CUT FOR YOUR NEXT PAY CHECK??**

Dear LIUNA Local [local number] Member:

I am writing to let you know that some Republicans in Congress are working on a bill that would **cut your pay by up to 60%**. The proposed repeal of prevailing wage on federal construction would slash wages and benefits on projects that you work on—roads and bridges and federal buildings.

**We have to fight back to protect LIUNA livelihoods.**

I need you to come to the next union meeting to learn more about this. We are working with allied groups and other unions to stop this attack but **YOU need to be in this fight.**

**This is about your paycheck and your benefits.** In the coming weeks, we will be asking you to participate in events and other efforts to pressure Congress to re-think this terrible legislation.

Please stay tuned and call the Hall with any questions.

Fraternally yours,

[name]

Business Manager



# Robocall Scripts

## Turnout Script

This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and your paycheck . This is your NAME calling to ask you to join thousands of your brothers and sisters at a rally against a cut to your paycheck of up to 60%. Republicans in Congress are considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages and threaten good union jobs.

If you are committed to attending, press 1 on your phone now. If we are united and heard, we can protect good jobs. Thank you—and again press 1 if you'll attend the rally to fight for good jobs.

## Patch-Through Script

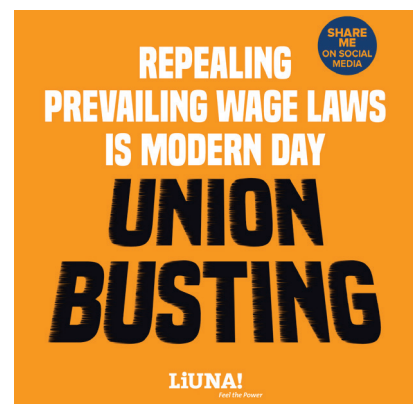
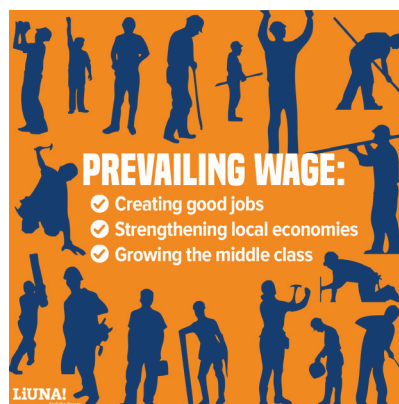
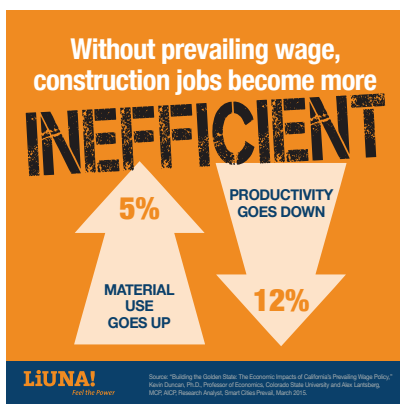
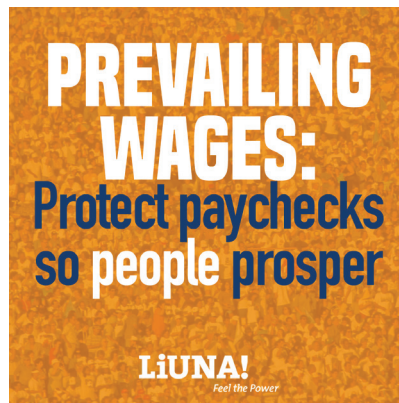
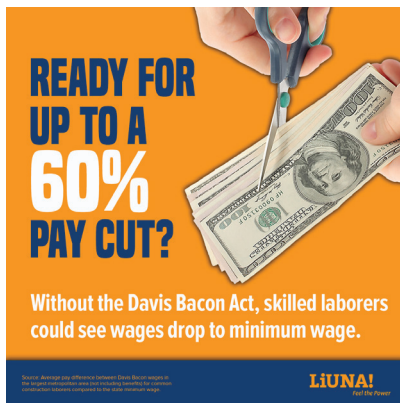
This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and paycheck. This is your NAME calling because Republicans in Congress are considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages up to 60% and threaten good union jobs.

Please take a moment to call your Representative at XXXX or press 1 now and deliver the message, vote no on a pay cut of up to 60% for construction workers. Once again press 1 on your phone to deliver the message to your representative to vote no on a pay cut for construction workers.

Thank you and goodbye.

# Sample Social Media Graphics

For files to post on your social media profiles, email [communications@liuna.org](mailto:communications@liuna.org)



## Example Tweets:

- #Prevailingwages ensure #construction workers earn a fair day's pay for a fair day's work
- #PrevailingWage laws save taxpayers money—better pay + better skills = more productivity
- Without #prevailingwages, #construction jobs become more inefficient
- In states with weak #prevailingwage laws, #construction workers fall behind #wages
- #PrevailingWage laws protect the #construction industry, #middleclass families & our economy
- #PrevailingWage isn't only for union workers, it's good for all construction workers
- Without #prevailingwages #LIUNA members would earn less & have fewer benefits
- #DYK low road contractors are pushing to repeal the DAVIS BACON ACT & state #prevailingwage laws
- The DAVIS BACON ACT protects paychecks & allows #workingclass people to get ahead & prosper

## Twitter Hashtags to Use:

#lu	#protectprevailingwages	#PrevailingWage	#prevailingwages
#jobs	#middleclass	#workingclass	#construction

Check [youtube.com/user/liunavideo](https://youtube.com/user/liunavideo) for video content.

# TELL CONGRESS: DON'T CUT MY PAY

**We need to build our nation's infrastructure the right way:** with skilled workers who earn good wages and have the opportunity to build a middle class life. Some members of Congress have set out to slash the wages and benefits of the hard-working, blue-collar men and women, by repealing the Davis Bacon Act.



## **Since 1931, the Davis Bacon Act Has Ensured That:**

- Contractors bidding on federal construction projects pay family-supporting wages that don't undermine local standards.
- Public projects are built by skilled, safe and well-trained construction craftspeople.
- Costly mistakes, accidents, and overruns are avoided when responsible contractors who employ a skilled workforce build projects.

## **SENATE BILL [#] IS BAD FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS**

**ELIMINATING PREVAILING WAGE HURTS  
WORKING-CLASS AMERICANS.**



**CALL CONGRESS TODAY AT  
202-224-3121  
TELL THEM:  
DON'T CUT MY PAY!**



**LiUNA!**

*Feel the Power*

[www.liuna.org](http://www.liuna.org)

# Member Talking Points for Testimony, Meetings or Hearings

## **Repealing the Davis Bacon Act would cut my paycheck and my benefits up to 60%.**

- As a construction worker, I see first-hand how prevailing wage keeps my wages from being cut by protecting a local wage rate in the construction industry.
- I can't afford a pay cut or to lose the benefits that provide health coverage for me and my family.
- Repealing Davis Bacon would let government spending create a race to the bottom. It's naïve to believe that contractors who want to pay lower wages and hire unskilled workers are giving taxpayers a better deal. They will be cutting corners and pocketing the savings as profits.

## **Davis Bacon prevailing wages are good for my community.**

- The Davis Bacon Act protects local jobs and local contractors by stopping irresponsible contractors from coming into my community with low paid and unskilled labor.
- Prevailing wage rates protect paychecks for all construction workers. The rates aren't a "union wage." They are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers.
- Without prevailing wage protection, workers like me can't pay the bills, we can't spend money at the grocery store, the gas pump, in local stores or afford to rent or buy a home.
- My tax dollars should support local jobs that feed our taxpayer investments back into the economy.

## **Davis Bacon protects me as a taxpayer by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled workforce.**

- Without Davis Bacon, contractors will lower pay and benefits and stop investing in worker training in order to win bids.
- Prevailing wage supports employment for skilled local tradespeople and the use of responsible contractors.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads, bridges and government buildings, there are more likely to be accidents, mistakes, and cost overruns.

*\*Use personal stories, such as "Without a prevailing wage rate, I will have to make tough financial choices like whether I can afford to pay for my children to participate in sports or whether we can take the family trip we planned."*

# Contractor Talking Points for Testimony or Hearings

## **The Davis Bacon Act is good for my business.**

- I am a responsible business owner and I want to attract and retain the best workers by offering good benefits and wages.
- The Davis Bacon Act helps my business compete on the quality of our work.
- A repeal will undermine me in the marketplace by hurting my ability to compete on the quality, safety and productivity advantage I have because I use union workers.

## **Prevailing wages help the economy and my community.**

- I am proud to support my community by hiring local workers.
- By offering a prevailing rate of pay and benefits, I am making an investment in my business and in my community.
- Without prevailing wages workers earn less and that takes away from our local tax base. That means there would be less for public schools and services that help attract businesses and make a community safe and secure.

## **The low bid, low quality contractor groups pushing repeal don't represent me.**

- As a business owner, I understand that a trained and skilled workforce requires adequate compensation and benefits and I am happy to make that investment.
- You get what you pay for. When contractors come in with bargain basement wages, you know they aren't attracting skilled workers with the experience and training to build schools, hospitals and public buildings to the highest standards.
- Taxpayers lose in the end if low bid, low quality contractors win bids because they won't be able to build public projects without costly mistakes, workplace accidents, and time and cost overruns.

# Sample Letters to Newspaper Editors from Members

Dear Editor,

Republicans in Congress are considering a repeal of the Davis Bacon Act. The federal Davis Bacon Act has protected taxpayers and the paychecks of construction workers for generations by setting a local prevailing wage rate on federal construction project based on a survey of actual wages, benefits, and training contributions paid in that community.

Prevailing wage isn't a "union wage." It's a wage rate that helps all construction workers and protects taxpayers by keeping low quality contractors from lowering wages and benefits to win bids.

When contractors lower pay to win bids, they often use unskilled workers which means not only are more experienced workers out of a job, but taxpayers have poorly constructed schools and public buildings and delays, accidents, and cost overruns are more frequent.

We should urge Congress to reject this attack on paychecks in the construction industry.

Sincerely,  
[name and local union]



# Business Manager Letter to Congress

[Date]

Dear Member of Congress,

I am writing to urge you to protect good local jobs by opposing a Davis Bacon prevailing wage repeal. Low quality contractors who are pushing members of Congress to repeal or weaken Davis Bacon are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.

This would either kill local jobs or drive down wages as much as up to 60% for the men and women I represent. Without the Davis Bacon Act, pay and benefits for all construction work is driven down as contractors compete for work based on who pays the lowest possible wage and provides the least possible benefits.

Prevailing wage law protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled local workforce. It is dangerous to let cut-rate, low-bid contractors build our roads, bridges and federal buildings with the cheapest labor. We want local companies employing skilled tradespeople who will be responsible for their work and use quality materials.

As the business manager of LIUNA Local Union X, I know first-hand how prevailing wage keeps public investment from driving down wages and helps constituents of your district get ahead by starting careers in construction.

Our community and our country is about more than low-wage jobs. I hope you will stand in solidarity with LIUNA and stop the repeal of the Davis Bacon Act.

Sincerely,

LIUNA Local Union X Business Manager





## **SECTION 2**

# **STATE PREVAILING WAGES**



# Handout

## Prevailing Wages Protect Paychecks and Taxpayers

The state prevailing wage law sets a local prevailing wage rate on state construction projects based on a survey of actual wages, benefits, and training contributions paid in that community. Construction workers earn fair wages and benefits for their work on public construction and taxpayers can depend on higher quality construction.

### Prevailing wage rates protect paychecks and allows working people to get ahead and prosper.

- The low quality contractor groups who are pushing to repeal or weaken prevailing wage laws are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.
- Prevailing wage rates support good jobs with career paths for workers in the construction industry because they take into account health, pension and training benefits—investments not made by low-wage contractors.
- Prevailing wage rates aren't a "union wage." They are local wages that help all construction workers earn a fair day's pay and benefits for a fair day's work.

### Prevailing wages are good for the community.

- Prevailing wages strengthen the overall economy by supporting good local jobs and spending at local businesses, such as grocery stores, malls and gas stations.
- Prevailing wages prevent government spending from driving down local wages and living standards.
- Prevailing wages maintain standards for workers from all backgrounds and enable minorities to benefit from training and apprenticeship programs that open doors to opportunity in the construction industry.

### Prevailing wage rates protect taxpayer dollars by keeping worksites safe and productive.

- Repealing prevailing wage would lower the quality of projects, and jeopardize worker safety on the job, leading to costly delays, accidents, and mistakes.
- Construction work is dangerous and it's even more dangerous without a strong prevailing wage law. An analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data on worker fatalities in construction bears out that states with weak or non-existent prevailing wage laws have a much higher incidence of fatal workplace incidents.<sup>1</sup>
- Lowering wages reduces on the job productivity. For example, a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.<sup>2</sup>

1. A Weakened State: The Economic and Social Impacts of Repeal of the Prevailing Wage Law in Illinois. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. [https://ler.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PWL\\_policy-brief\\_spreads041.pdf](https://ler.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PWL_policy-brief_spreads041.pdf)

2. Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. [http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing\\_wages/wages\\_productivity\\_highway.pdf](http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf)

# Leader Talking Points for Member Meetings, Testimony, News Media

## **Prevailing wages protect paychecks for all construction workers.**

- Prevailing wage rates aren't necessarily a "union wage." They are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers. Without it, construction workers earn less and more families will need some form of public assistance to supplement their income.
- Low road contractors who are working to repeal or weaken the state prevailing wage law are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.
- Without a prevailing wage rate, LIUNA members could see their wage and compensation package plummet up to 60%.

## **Bottom of the barrel contractors are pushing repeal so that they can cut workers' pay and pocket the profit.**

- Responsible contractors understand that they are making an investment that helps their business succeed by fairly compensating a skilled and trained workforce.
- It's the irresponsible contractors who are eager to cut workers' wages who are pushing repeal.
- And, don't be fooled when low quality contractors pay less in wages, they do not pass savings on to taxpayers—they pocket the profits.<sup>1</sup>

## **Prevailing wage rates protect taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built to the highest standards.**

- Prevailing wage rates often include investment in training and apprenticeship programs which not only provide a career path for workers but also ensure that projects are built to the highest standards of quality.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads and bridges, there are more likely to be mistakes, workplace accidents, change orders, and cost overruns.
- Lowering wages actually reduces on the job productivity. For example, in a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manzo, Lantsberg, Duncan, The Economic, Fiscal, and Social Impacts of State Prevailing Wage Laws: Choosing Between the High Road and the Low Road in the Construction Industry, February 9, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. [http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing\\_wages/wages\\_productivity\\_highway.pdf](http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf)

# Business Manager Letter to Members

[Date]

## **RE: UP TO [PERCENT] CUT FOR YOUR NEXT PAY CHECK??**

Dear LIUNA Local [local number] Member:

I am writing to let you know that state lawmakers are working on a bill that would **cut your pay up to [percent]**. The proposed repeal of prevailing wage on public construction would slash wages and benefits on projects that you work on.

### **We have to fight back to protect LIUNA livelihoods.**

I need you to come to the next union meeting to learn more about this. We are working with allied groups and other unions to stop this attack but **YOU need to be in this fight.**

**This is about your paycheck and your benefits.** In the coming weeks, we will be asking you to participate in events and other efforts to pressure lawmakers to re-think this terrible legislation.

Please stay tuned and call the Hall with any questions.

Fraternally yours,

[name]  
Business Manager

# Robocall Scripts

## Turnout Script

This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and your paycheck. This is your NAME calling to ask you to join thousands of your brother and sisters at a rally against a cut to your paycheck of up to [percent]. Lawmakers are considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages and threaten good union jobs.

If you are committed to attending, press 1 on your phone now. If we are united and heard, we can protect good jobs. Thank you—and again press 1 if you'll attend the rally to fight for good jobs.

## Patch-Through Script

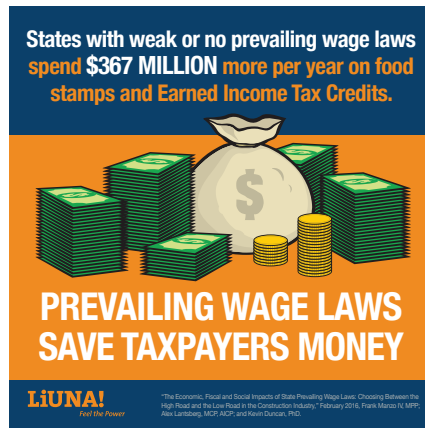
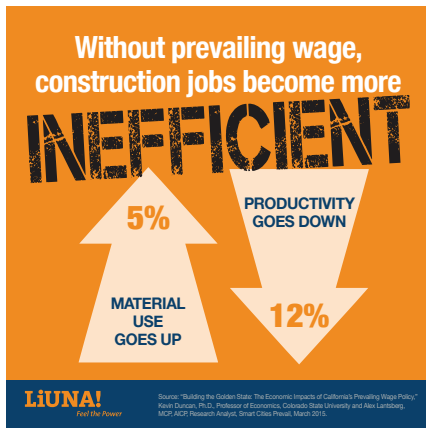
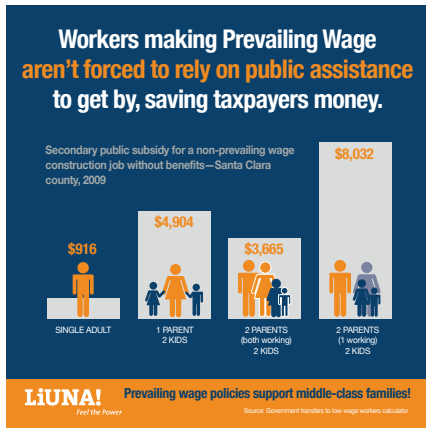
This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and paycheck. This is your NAME calling because the state legislature is considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages up to [percent] and threaten good union jobs.

Please take a moment to call your state representative at XXXX or press 1 now and deliver the message, vote no on a up to 60% pay cut for construction workers. Once again press 1 on your phone to deliver the message to your representative to vote no on a pay cut for construction workers.

Thank you and goodbye.

# Sample Social Media Graphics

For files to post on your social media profiles, email [communications@liuna.org](mailto:communications@liuna.org)



## Example Tweets:

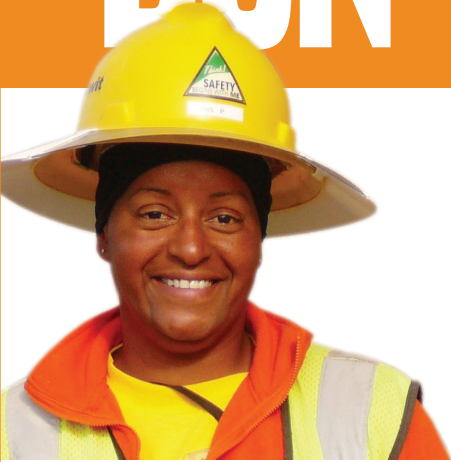
Fill in the blanks and add your own image to personalize tweets

- Call (XXXXXX) and urge lawmakers to protect #prevailingwage laws for (Enter State XXX)
- #Attacks on #prevailingwage hurt #middleclass families
- #Prevailingwage laws help #veterans. Attacking #prevailingwages could cost hundreds of veterans their #jobs
- #LIUNA Local (X) members of rallied to #protectprevailingwages

## Twitter Hashtags to Use:

#1u      #protectprevailingwages      #PrevailingWage      #prevailingwages  
#jobs      #middleclass      #workingclass      #veterans

# TELL STATE LAWMAKERS: DON'T CUT MY PAY



**We need to build our nation's infrastructure the right way:** with skilled workers who earn good wages and have the opportunity to build a middle class life. State lawmakers are considering a bill that would slash the wages and benefits of the hard-working, blue-collar men and women, by repealing the state prevailing wage law.

## The State Prevailing Wage Law Ensures that:

- Contractors bidding on public construction projects pay family-supporting wages that don't undermine local standards.
- Public projects are built by skilled, safe and well-trained construction craftspeople.
- Costly mistakes, accidents, and overruns are avoided because projects are built by responsible contractors who employ a skilled workforce.



**STATE BILL X IS BAD FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS  
AND WILL CUT YOUR PAY AND BENEFITS**



**CALL THE STATEHOUSE TODAY**  
**XXX-XXX-XXXX**  
**TELL LAWMAKERS: DON'T CUT MY PAY!**

[www.liuna.org](http://www.liuna.org)

**LiUNA!**

*Feel the Power*



# Member Talking Points for Testimony, Meetings or Hearings

## **Repealing prevailing wage would cut my paycheck and my benefits up to [percent].**

- I can't afford a pay cut or to lose the benefits that provide health coverage for me and my family.
- And, as a skilled construction worker who lives here in this state, my wages shouldn't be put on the chopping block by bottom of the barrel contractors.
- As a construction worker, I see first-hand how prevailing wage keeps my wages from being cut by setting a local wage rate in the construction industry.
- Repealing prevailing wages would let government spending create a race to the bottom. It's naïve to believe that contractors who want to pay lower wages and hire unskilled workers are giving taxpayers a better deal. They will be cutting corners and pocketing the savings as profits.

## **Prevailing wages are good for my community.**

- The prevailing wage law protects local jobs and local contractors by stopping irresponsible contractors from coming into my community with low paid and unskilled labor.
- Prevailing wage rates protect paychecks for all construction workers. The rates aren't a "union wage." They are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers.
- Without prevailing wage protection, workers like me can't pay the bills, we can't spend money at the grocery store, the gas pump, in local stores or afford to rent or buy a home.
- That means fewer dollars in our local economy and a smaller budget for public schools and services.

## **Prevailing wages protect me as a taxpayer by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled workforce.**

- Without a prevailing wage rate, contractors will lower pay and benefits and stop investing in worker training in order to win bids.
- Prevailing wage supports employment for skilled local tradespeople and the use of responsible contractors.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads, bridges and government buildings, there are more likely to be accidents, mistakes, and cost overruns.

*\*Use personal stories, such as "Without a prevailing wage rate, I will have to make tough financial choices like whether I can afford to pay for my children to participate in sports or whether we can take the family trip we planned."*

# Contractor Talking Points for Testimony or Hearings

## **Prevailing wage is good for my business.**

- I am a responsible business owner and I want to attract and retain the best workers by offering good benefits and wages.
- Prevailing wage laws help my business compete on the quality of our work.
- A prevailing wage repeal will undermine me in the marketplace by hurting my ability to compete on the quality, safety and productivity advantage I have because I use union workers.

## **Prevailing wages help the economy and my community.**

- I am proud to support my community by hiring local workers.
- By offering a prevailing rate of pay and benefits, I am making an investment in my business and in my community.
- Without prevailing wages workers earn less and that takes away from our local tax base. That means there would be less for public schools and services that help attract businesses and make a community safe and secure.

## **The low bid, low quality contractor groups pushing repeal don't represent me.**

- As a business owner, I understand that a trained and skilled workforce requires adequate compensation and benefits and I am happy to make that investment.
- You get what you pay for. When contractors come in with bargain basement wages, you know they aren't attracting skilled workers with the experience and training to build schools, hospitals and public buildings to the highest standards.
- Taxpayers lose in the end if low bid, low quality contractors win bids because they won't be able to build public projects without costly mistakes, workplace accidents, and time and cost overruns.

# Sample Letters to Newspaper Editors from Members

Dear Editor,

Our state assembly recently took up consideration of a repeal of our prevailing wage law. This is the last thing we need in our state. Prevailing wage isn't a "union wage." It's a wage rate that helps all construction workers and protects taxpayers.

For me, it would mean a pay cut up to [percent]. And, to that, I say: No, thanks.

Prevailing wage sets a wage rate on public construction projects to keep low quality contractors from lowering wages and benefits to win bids.

When contractors lower pay to win bids, they often use unskilled workers which means not only are more experienced workers out of a job, but taxpayers have poorly constructed schools and public buildings and delays, accidents, and cost overruns are more frequent.

We should reject this attack on paychecks in the construction industry.

Sincerely,  
[name and local union]

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Dear Editor,

I am writing to speak out against prevailing wage repeal. Our community and our country is about more than low-wage jobs.

Our country is about the opportunity to get ahead and prosper. The bill put forth by lawmakers is a special interest effort to cut workers' pay and benefits.

Without prevailing wage laws, pay and benefits for all construction work is driven down as contractors compete for work based on who pays the lowest possible wage and provides the least possible benefits

Our legislators should be honest about this law—it's really an attack on workers in the construction industry and our opportunity to prosper.

Sincerely,  
[name and local union]

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Dear Editor,

Out of state contractors are pushing lawmakers to repeal our state's prevailing wage law so they can use unskilled out of state workers and avoid paying good wages and benefits.

Let's be honest, when contractors pay less for labor they aren't giving taxpayers a discount. Taxpayers are getting a bill in the form of poorly constructed buildings that take longer to build and cost more in the long run.

This is an attack on construction workers and it's an attack on our community. Legislators should reject a repeal of the prevailing wage.

Sincerely,  
[name and local union]

# Business Manager Letter to State Legislator/ Governor

[Date]

Dear State Official,

I am writing to urge you to protect good local jobs by opposing a prevailing wage repeal. Low quality contractors who are working to repeal or weaken prevailing wage laws are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.

This would either kill local jobs or drive down wages up to [percent] for the men and women I represent. Without prevailing wage laws, pay and benefits for all construction work is driven down as contractors compete for work based on who pays the lowest possible wage and provides the least possible benefits.

Prevailing wage law protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled local workforce. It is dangerous to let cut-rate, low-bid contractors build our schools, hospitals, and bridges with the cheapest labor. We want local companies employing skilled tradespeople who will be responsible for their work and use quality materials.

As the business manager of LIUNA Local Union X, I know first-hand how prevailing wage keeps public investment from driving down wages and helps constituents of your district get ahead by starting careers in construction.

Our community and our country is about more than low-wage jobs. I hope you will stand in solidarity with LIUNA and stop the repeal of prevailing wage in our state.

Sincerely,

LIUNA Local Union X Business Manager

# Sample News Release

## Thousands of Workers Rally to Protect Quality Public Construction, Stop Pay Cut

**City, State (Date)**—As lawmakers in the statehouse consider a repeal of prevailing wage which would cut the pay up to [percent] for tens of thousands of construction workers, workers are gathering for a rally against the bill. Low quality contractors and special interest groups pushing this legislation aim to turn good jobs into low-wage jobs with no benefits.

Prevailing wage law protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled local workforce. It is dangerous to let cut-rate, low-bid contractors build our schools, hospitals, and bridges with the cheapest labor. We want local companies employing skilled tradespeople who will be responsible for their work and use quality materials.

“Lawmakers pushing a prevailing wage cut are being extremely short-sighted. Cutting the pay of construction workers will increase taxpayer costs, cut wages and threaten the quality of public construction,” said Union Representative Name.

The rally is part of a larger coordinated effort that involves tens of thousands of worker phone calls and emails to lawmakers to stop the attack on prevailing wage.



# LIUNA!

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[www.LIUNA.org](http://www.LIUNA.org)