who we are
what we stand for
what we fight for

LiUNA!
Laborers' International Union of North America

Feel the Power

www.liuna.org
who are we?

LIUNA—the Laborers’ International Union of North America—is the most progressive, aggressive and fastest-growing union of construction workers, and one of the most significant unions representing public service employees.

Working men and women who carry a LIUNA membership card live in every community across the U.S. and Canada and come from every part of the world. We work on highways and bridges, waterways and dams, in universities and in government. We build and weatherize houses, and make cities, counties, states and the federal government work. From pouring concrete to handling mail, from helping the sick heal to helping the young learn, we literally and figuratively build America and Canada.

We are 500,000 proud people united through collective bargaining agreements which help us earn superior pay, better benefits and more opportunity.

with LIUNA, we live better.
what do we stand for?

LIUNA stands for **fairness** for working people, regardless of color, gender, race or ethnicity, no matter our country of origin.

We stand for helping **employers succeed** based on providing the highest quality of work in the world and by being responsible members of our communities.

LIUNA stands for **individual advancement** and opening the doors to new opportunity by offering members and employers the best free adult education system there is, with training in the skills needed to build our communities and our countries.

We stand for a strong union movement that can restore the strength of the **middle class**, and we are doing our share with one of the union movement’s most ambitious organizing commitments to help tens of thousands of working people join together.

**we stand for power for working people.**
what do we fight for?

In government, through the power of our members and allies, on jobsites, through our unity and the strength of our collective bargaining agreements, and in communities, through our activism, friends and families

Everyone who works deserves:
- a fair wage
- health and safety protections
- the right to safe working conditions
- respect, and the freedom to join together in a union
- access to health care and a dignified retirement

We owe it to working people:
- to fight for collective bargaining rights
- to defend family-supporting laws such as the U.S. Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Act
- to build a modern infrastructure that keeps our countries competitive and creates good jobs
- to strive for a sound pension system and national health care policy
- to stand up for laws that acknowledge the contributions of immigrants
- to make international trade fair

we fight to reward work.
what membership means

Being a member of LIUNA today honors a heritage that began in 1903 when courageous workers overcame hostility, threats and violence to join together.

We honor that heritage through our struggles today—being heard in government, raising standards for workers and employers on the job, and reaching out to a new generation of workers yearning for a better life. The rewards come in better pay, benefits and working conditions, and in pride for adding the strength of each of our voices to something stronger.

Whether it’s by going to work for an employer who already works with LIUNA, or by joining with co-workers to organize and bring LIUNA into your workplace, you can join us.

LiUNA!

Feel the Power

905 16th Street NW | Washington, D.C. 20006 | www.liuna.org | 202-737-8320

TERENCE M. O’SULLIVAN, General President

ARMAND E. SABITONI, General Secretary-Treasurer
America's Roads and Bridges Need a Raise

The U.S. highway system marveled the world when it was built as a response to the nation’s security needs. Today it has fallen into disrepair and is stretched beyond capacity to the point where it is no longer functional in many regions. Without the same visionary leadership and national will that created our highway system, America's ability to compete in the global economy will be crippled.

The U.S. economy is dependent on surface transportation – $1 of every $10 of the gross domestic product is tied to moving goods and people. Yet, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, 170,000 miles of our roads are in poor condition.

- “Traffic congestion costs commuters and businesses $170 billion a year due to 4 billion hours in delays, the DOT’s chief economist has determined. The cost is growing at twice the rate of the economy, placing a significant drag on competitiveness.
- Motorists pay on average $710 every year for gas they waste due to traffic congestion, which also increases our reliance on foreign oil.

Deteriorating roads are a threat to public safety and to our quality of life.

- According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, roadway conditions are a significant factor in about one-third of traffic fatalities.
- Rush hour has doubled in urban areas from three to six hours. In 1982, Los Angeles was the only urban area in the U.S. where commuters lost 40 or more hours a year to traffic delays. Now, 28 urban areas face those conditions.

Bringing our highways up to par would create more than 1 million jobs a year and leave behind real assets for future generations.

- Investment in our roads and bridges through the Highway Bill is set to expire May 31. A long-term full-investment Highway Bill is critical in order to build and maintain safe and efficient transportation systems that will promote our economic competitiveness in the future.
- LIUNA is open to any practical options to address the crisis facing our infrastructure. However, adjusting the gas tax, which funds our Highway Trust Fund and hasn’t been raised since 1993, remains the most realistic, viable and sustainable solution.
BRIDGES

Every day, millions of Americans drive on bridges which Federal Highway Administration inspectors have deemed structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. At best, these bridges are inefficient. At worst they are deadly, as the I-35 Bridge collapse in Minneapolis showed.

Our transportation system is held together by thousands of bridges, many of which are not up to the task – nearly 25 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

- Generally, a structurally deficient bridge is deteriorating and can be unsafe. A structurally obsolete bridge is generally outdated, such as being too low to waterway to allow water shipping traffic or unable to meet traffic capacity. Both are serious problems which affect our nation’s competitiveness.

- Some of our country’s most densely populated areas are rife with deficient and obsolete bridges, including Washington, D.C. (65 percent), Massachusetts (50 percent), Rhode Island (52 percent) and New York (37 percent). These bridges are continually jammed with traffic, increasing the risk of auto accidents.

- Time is running out on many bridges, which were typically built to last 50 years. The average U.S. bridge is 43 years old, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The problems facing America’s bridges are going unaddressed. Action and resources are needed now to prevent the cost and danger from escalating.

- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials estimates that repairing deficient and obsolete bridges in the U.S. would require about $140 billion – far more than the estimated $10.5 billion a year currently invested in bridge improvements.

- Freight, predominantly transported by trucks, is steadily increasing and tonnage is forecast to double by 2035. Freight stresses bridges more than commuter traffic. As bridges become deficient, weight restrictions choke our nation’s ability to move freight.

Upgrading and repairing bridges can provide an immediate and long-term boost to the American economy.

- Based on figures from the U.S. Department of Transportation, an annual $17 billion investment to make our bridges safer could spur the creation of 476,000 jobs.
National Poll: A Look Into How Crumbling Roads Affect Americans

$80 BILLION
THE PRICE IN AUTO REPAIRS THAT POOR ROAD CONDITIONS COST U.S. DRIVERS EACH YEAR

Source: TRIP

HOW HAVE POOR ROAD CONDITIONS, SUCH AS POTHOLES, AFFECTED YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW?*

- Added wear and tear on a vehicle: 69%
- Caused delays in getting to work or an appointment: 48%
- Almost had an accident or lost control of a vehicle: 40%
- Contributed to an accident: 28%

WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE ROADS & HIGHWAYS WHERE YOU LIVE?

- Very good condition: 45%
- Fairly good condition: 15%
- Not so good condition: 20%
- Poor condition: 20%

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT ROAD CONDITIONS BEING UNSAFE?

- Worry often: 59%
- Worry often: 27%

*Findings from a June 2014 Hart Research Associates LiUNA Survey
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: (202) 942-2246 or communications@liuna.org

New Highway Bill: Good things can happen in Congress

Statement of LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan on Passage of the Funding America’s Surface Transportation Act

Washington, D.C. (Friday, Dec. 4, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on passage of the Funding America’s Surface Transportation Act by both chambers of Congress:

LIUNA applauds Congress for its bipartisan action in passing the Funding America’s Surface Transportation Act, ending a decade of duct-tape approaches to our country’s critical transportation infrastructure.

They have proven good things can happen in Congress. Taking care of the transportation system that we rely on every day is the kind of action voters want and expect more of from Congress. With the passage of this five-year highway bill and a signature expected from the President, our nation will be safer, our economy stronger and good jobs more plentiful. This is a victory for the country, and for the powerful coalition of labor, business and civic groups, as well as, the hard-working members of LIUNA, who have persistently and relentlessly campaigned for passage of long-term investment.

Legislators now have ample time to move forward in a similar fashion to craft a transportation policy with a sustainable flow of needed revenue to avoid the damaging practices that have preceded its action. To do otherwise will return the U.S. transportation system to a state of decline and deterioration.

Special recognition goes to Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Boxer, Chairman Shuster, and Ranking Member DeFazio for their efforts to pass this legislation.

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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.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Richard Greer, 202-251-5347

LIUNA Joins Elected and Business Leaders in Call for Congress to Invest in Critical Infrastructure and Save Lives, Create Jobs

“It’s Time to Stop Kicking the Can Down the Road and Fix the Road”

Washington, D.C. (May 13, 2015) – At a news conference with elected officials, business leaders and infrastructure advocates, Terry O’Sullivan, the General President of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), called on Congress to quickly develop a long-term solution for America’s deteriorating roads, bridges, and other infrastructure.

LIUNA represents a half-million workers, predominantly in the construction industry, and is a longtime advocate for greater infrastructure investment.

Noting that poor roads contribute to more than 10,000 U.S. traffic fatalities each year, that bridges are literally falling down, and that potholes are damaging vehicles and making roads unsafe, O’Sullivan called on Congress to stop “dodging the issue, and playing political games.”

“The proud men and women of LIUNA, and of all the building trades, are ready to do our job: rebuilding America’s infrastructure,” O’Sullivan said. “We call on Congress today to do its job: pass a long-term, well-funded highway bill; invest in our great nation’s infrastructure; and develop strategies to fund these projects for decades to come.”

Since 2009, Congress has failed to reauthorize the Highway Trust Fund to address the transportation infrastructure crisis, and has instead passed more than 30 short-term patches. The fund is on course to begin running dry again this summer.

O’Sullivan urged Congress to act quickly so that transportation and other infrastructure projects can get off the ground. “The responsibility for every stalled infrastructure project, and every worker trapped in jobless despair, rests with Congress until it acts,” he said.

According to the Associated Equipment Distributors, every dollar spent on infrastructure construction results in nearly $2 of growth elsewhere in the economy. And for every three construction jobs created, five are created in other sectors.
In all, about 14.5 million workers, or 11 percent of the workforce, are employed in infrastructure jobs; most with good benefits and family-supporting pay, which quickly spreads through local communities.

Those are jobs, O’Sullivan said, “that can put food on the table of blue-collar, working families, and create a road to prosperity for unemployed construction workers. It’s about transforming not only the lives of these workers, but the future of our country, and our economy.”

Also joining the news conference were Ray LaHood, former U.S. Transportation Secretary and Co-Chair of Building America’s Future; Salt Lake City, Utah Mayor and National League of Cities President Ralph Becker; Anaheim, California Mayor Tom Tait; and National Association of Manufacturers President and CEO Jay Timmons.

The event was part of “Infrastructure Week,” which includes hundreds of participating leaders and organizations fighting to increase investment in the nation's critical infrastructure.

“Ordinary Americans can’t get away from the crumbling state of our infrastructure; we’re here today to make sure that members of Congress can’t get away from their responsibility to do something about it,” O’Sullivan said. “It’s time to stop kicking the can down the road, and fix the road.”
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

“It’s Time to Be Grown-Ups”

Statement of LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan on the Introduction of the Update Act

Washington, DC. (February 4, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today regarding Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer’s introduction of the Update Act:

Congressman Blumenauer’s proposal to adjust the gas tax to pay for desperately needed investment to make our roads and bridges safe is a bargain American motorists will accept if Congress and the President lead on the issue.

While roads and bridges crumble – contributing to an estimated 10,000 deaths a year, according to research on poor road conditions – the main way our country pays for surface transportation has been frozen since 1993. Since then, the gas tax has lost 40 percent of its value.

Congress has many viable options to choose from, but one thing’s certain: It’s time to end the ideological logjam over taxes. For a little courage, there’s a proud tradition to lean on when it comes to adjusting the gas tax. President Roosevelt did it. As did Presidents Eisenhower, Reagan, Bush and Clinton. It’s time to be grown-ups and acknowledge to the American people that we get what we pay for.

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Workers Who Build America Welcome President’s Call for Increased Infrastructure Investment

Statement of Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA, On President Obama’s Build America Initiative Announcement

Washington, D.C. (January 16, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on the announcement of next steps for President Obama’s Build America initiative at the Anacostia River Tunnel Project:

LIUNA members working on the Anacostia River Tunnel project are proud to stand alongside Vice President Biden today as next steps are announced for the Build America Initiative. The setting for the announcement, the construction site of the 24,000 foot-long tunnel project designed to help reduce combined sewer overflows into the Anacostia River, is an example of public investment in infrastructure that has created family-supporting jobs for local workers that benefit the environment and water quality.

LIUNA welcomes the Administration’s efforts to increase investment in infrastructure including the use of private sector resources. From highways and roads, to water and energy infrastructure, our needs are great. However, public-private sector approaches must remain a supplement for public investment, not a substitute. The National Council of State Legislators estimates that only twenty percent of transportation projects can likely be completed via a public-private partnership. Furthermore, we cannot stress enough the importance of ensuring that public-private partnerships are structured in a way that leads to high road job creation rather than a race-to-the-bottom.

LIUNA will continue to urge members of Congress to have the courage and conviction to address the need for long-term investment in America’s crumbling infrastructure through a long-term full investment Highway bill, support for the construction of the Keystone Pipeline as well as other energy infrastructure, and investment in clean and safe water.

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Statement of Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA, on the Status of Highway Bill Reauthorization in Congress

“With the Jobs and the Safety of Americans at Risk, Congress Must Feel Compelled to Act”

Washington, D.C. (June 25, 2014) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on the status of Highway Bill reauthorization in Congress:

With the jobs and the safety of Americans at risk, Congress must feel compelled to act on a long-term Transportation Reauthorization bill, and not just a short term extension. A fourth of America’s bridges are deficient or obsolete. Poor road surfaces, such as potholes, are now a contributing factor to a third of traffic fatalities, needlessly costing approximately 10,000 lives every year.

That is why LIUNA has been traveling through Congressional districts across the country with its crushed “getting schooled in infrastructure” bus, carrying a replica of a chunk of fallen bridge. The symbol has resonated with Americans from Pennsylvania to Ohio to Michigan, attracting crowds, elected officials and news media who believe Congress must pass a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill this year.

While there appears to be movement on ensuring that the Highway Trust fund does not go bankrupt by the end of this summer, Congress has no valid excuses to not act on a long-term plan. There are multiple viable options which would end the duct-taping of our failing roads and bridges and provide the long-term investment our nation, our people and our economy needs. If Congress fails, it will be due to cowardice in standing up to extremists who are willing to destroy the critical transportation infrastructure of our country to make an ideological political point.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has found the will to work in a bipartisan manner to pass its piece of the reauthorization. It is time for the rest of the Senate and House of Representatives to do the same.

Our failing transportation infrastructure does not discriminate by political party – we are all affected. We should be able to expect a bipartisan solution.

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See LIUNA’s campaign to press for long term, full investment in our roads and bridges – including radio ads, billboards, online action and the “Getting Schooled in Infrastructure” school bus tour – at www.FixOurBridges.org.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

"Getting Schooled in Infrastructure" Tour Begins; Highlights America's Failing Roads and Bridges and Critical Need for Congress to Pass a Long-Term, Full-Investment Highway Bill

Multi-State Tour Begins at Shuttered I-495 Bridge In Delaware, Continues for Six Weeks Through Nation’s Heartland, Before Ending at U.S. Capitol

June 16, 2014 – The “Getting Schooled in Infrastructure” school bus tour kicked off today at the now-closed I-495 bridge in Wilmington, with a real school bus which has been crushed and carries a prop resembling a large piece of a fallen bridge. The bus will travel through more than 22 cities and Congressional districts.

The prop is part of a campaign by LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – to press Congress to pass a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill this year. The campaign also includes radio ads, billboards, online activity and grassroots action.

“It’s time to stop sugar-coating this issue,” said LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan. “We are not trying to scare people, but we are trying to wake people and Congress up.”

If Congress does not act, the nation’s already failing roads and bridges will worsen.

Currently:

- One in four bridges is deficient or obsolete, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. The average U.S. bridge is 46 years old, dangerously close to the average lifespan of 50 years. Without investment, more bridge failures are likely such as the high-profile ones that have occurred from the deadly Minneapolis bridge collapse to the I-5 collapse in Washington State to this month’s closure of the heavily-traveled I-495 Delaware bridge after it was observed tilting.
• Poor road conditions, such as potholes, are now a contributing factor in a third of traffic fatalities, equating to about 10,000 lost lives each year, according to the transportation research group, TRIP.

Last week, LIUNA released a national poll by Hart Research Associates, which uncovered the degree of concern most Americans have about their roads. About six in 10 say they worry about poor road conditions – 27% of them worrying often.

Four in 10 say they or someone they know has almost had an accident or lost control of their car due to poor road surfaces, and 28% say poor roads have caused an accident involving themselves or someone they know. And a striking 69% say poor roads cost them in wear and tear on their cars – a “pothole penalty” that equates to $324 a year for the average driver, according to TRIP. Experiences and concerns are similar regardless of political party.

The Highway Bill authorizes resources to be dispersed to states for roads and bridges from the Highway Trust Fund. The fund provides the largest share of transportation investment for most states. The fund is expected to begin running dry in about a month. And without action by Congress, the fund will completely stop dispersing road and bridge funds on Oct. 1.

Money for the Highway Trust Fund comes from the federal gas tax. A key reason the fund is in crisis is because the 18.4 cent tax has not been adjusted for 21 years. Due rising construction materials costs and vehicle fuel efficiency, the tax has declined in value by 40 percent during those 21 years.

“Congress has multiple, viable options to consider,” O’Sullivan said. “But it is time to act. The most reliable, tested investment resource for our roads and bridges is the gas tax and adjusting it will give Americans what they want and need – safer roads and bridges in their states and communities.” LIUNA has been joined by a broad group, including the 54-million-member AAA, the Chamber of Commerce, Building America’s Future, and others – in its call to adjust the gas tax.

Initial stops for the “Getting Schooled” bus following Wilmington are in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, Allentown, Chambersburg, Hollidaysburg, Altoona and Pittsburgh. Through the summer the bus is scheduled to travel several states, including Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia and Maryland, before ending in Washington, D.C.

In addition to the bus tour, LIUNA’s radio ads urging Congress to act were launched today in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, and billboards will continue to go up in each state ahead of deficient bridges or on deteriorating roadways.

Motorists and concerned citizens are directed to www.FixOurBridges.org and www.RepairOurRoads.org where they can learn more and easily send a message to their member of Congress.

LIUNA will also be urging its half-million members to reach out to Congress over the next several months.
“For LIUNA, passing a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill this year is about creating jobs – but it’s as much about making our roads and bridges safe,” O’Sullivan said. “Like most working people, we rely on them every day.”

Radio ads, billboards and other campaign materials can be found at www.FixOurBridges.org.

For updated information on the “Getting Schooled” tour, follow LIUNA on twitter @LIUNA.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

As Highway Trust Fund Nears Collapse, Poll Shows a Majority of Americans Worry About Unsafe Conditions

Nearly Three in Ten Say Road Conditions Have Contributed to an Accident; Two-Thirds Say It’s Adding to Wear and Tear on Vehicles

Washington, D.C. (June 12, 2014) – As the Highway Trust Fund nears collapse, a new national random-sample survey released today shows that a majority of Americans are worried about unsafe conditions on roads and highways. Nearly three in ten say poor road conditions have contributed to an accident and two-thirds say road conditions are wearing down their vehicles.

The poll was commissioned to Hart Research Associates by the Laborers’ International Union of North America. Interviews were conducted May 29 – June 1.

Key findings from the survey:

- 59% of Americans worry about unsafe road conditions due to poor road surfaces – and 27% worry often.
- Worries are highest in the Northeast (69%) and Midwest (67%) and in urban areas (70%).
- 28% say road conditions have contributed to an accident involving themselves or someone they know.
- 40% say they or someone they know has almost had an accident or lost control of their car due to poor road surfaces.
- 69% say poor road conditions contribute to wear and tear on their car.
- Poor road conditions affect people across all segments of society and across all political persuasions. Democrats and Republicans are both likely to say they have been affected.

“It’s time to stop sugar-coating this issue,” said LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan. “Americans have real concerns about safety due to the neglect of our roads and bridges. It is the solemn responsibility of Congress to pass a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill this year.”

Said former Gov. Ed Rendell, co-chair of Building America’s Future: “There is no doubt that it is past time for Congress to act on a long-term transportation and infrastructure plan. Investing in our infrastructure creates jobs and makes us more competitive in the global economy. Congress is hung up
on the price tag of the investment the country needs, but they should really be worried about the cost of inaction. We can’t afford to wait any longer. Congress needs to take bold action and they need to do it now.”

Avery Ash, Director of Federal Relations for the American Automobile Association, also joined the poll release. “This survey – as well as AAA’s own polling showing that two-thirds of Americans believe the federal government should invest more than it does now on roads, bridges and mass transit systems – make it clear that motorists have serious concerns about road safety.”

In fact, according to the transportation research group, TRIP, poor road conditions such as potholes contribute to a third of all traffic fatalities – about 10,000 lost lives a year.

There are multiple proposals before Congress to fix the Highway Trust Fund and ensure a long-term reliable source of investment for roads and bridges in states across the country.

“I think it’s time our roads get a permanent fix,” said Indianapolis resident Raelene Carlton, who was among those surveyed and related problems with potholes that damaged her car. “There were three big potholes at the end of my street that were unavoidable. They broke my car’s tie rods! After failed attempts to get it fixed, I was about to make a trip to the gravel pit across the street to fill the hole myself.”

“Congress has no excuse not to act,” O’Sullivan said. “For LIUNA, passing a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill is about creating jobs – but it’s as much about making our roads and bridges safe. Like most working people, we rely on them every day.”

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Details on survey results can be found at www.liuna.org/poll.

As part of its effort to advocate for transportation investment, LIUNA has launched radio ads, billboards and online action, which can be previewed at www.RepairOurRoads.org. In addition, LIUNA will kick off the “Getting Schooled in Infrastructure” school bus tour Monday in Wilmington, Delaware, where the heavily trafficked I-495 Bridge over the Christina River has been closed due to safety concerns. The tour includes a crushed school bus which will travel other parts of the country to highlight the need for a full-investment, long-term Highway Bill.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: 202-942-2246 or communications@liuna.org

“Gimmicks Will Not Address the Dire Situation of Our Roads and Bridges”

Washington, D.C. (June 2, 2014) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today regarding the proposal by some House Republicans to patch the Highway Trust Fund:

The idea of robbing the U.S. Postal Service to provide another duct-tape fix to our nation’s critical transportation infrastructure would damage both Americans who rely on the mail service and those who want safe roads and bridges.

Gimmicks will not address the dire situation of our roads and bridges.

Congress has several responsible, viable options before it. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has passed a bi-partisan Highway Bill that would stabilize the Highway Trust Fund for six years. The U.S. Transportation Department has proposed a four-year plan. And Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer has filed a bill which would stabilize the fund for 10 years through an incremental 15-cent gas tax increase. Each proposal would not only be a step toward making our roads and bridges safer, they would create and protect hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Robbing the Postal Service to provide inadequate transportation investment would not only threaten nearly 100,000 Postal jobs – the uncertainty it would create in the construction industry would forego the creation of hundreds of thousands of good construction jobs.

The American people want responsible action. They understand that we must invest in fixing crumbling roads and aging bridges. Opinion survey after opinion survey show that the American public will support paying for safe roads and bridges, including through a modest gas-tax increase. Kicking the can down our pothole-filled roads is a recipe for further decline.

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TESTIMONY OF TERENCE M. O’SULLIVAN
GENERAL PRESIDENT
LABORERS’ INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Thank you Chairman Shuster, ranking member Rahall and distinguished members of the Committee.

On behalf of the Laborers’ International Union of North America, the men and women who dedicate their lives to building America, I want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to be at the first hearing under your leadership. We respect your willingness to take on what will be a tremendous challenge.

We are confident that your commitment to our nation and your family’s legacy of safeguarding our fundamental infrastructure will serve you well.

I’m also honored to be here with two good friends, Tom Donohue of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Governor Ed Rendell of Building America’s Future. Both are fine leaders of organizations with whom we share the goal of building a modern and lasting American infrastructure.

LIUNA members build the critical infrastructure of our country. But we don’t only build, like all working people we rely on the basic infrastructure of America every day.

The foundation of our great nation was created with a strong federal role and it must be maintained and strengthened with a strong vibrant federal role.

The federal government’s involvement is not only required because of our common fate or to ensure the quality of daily life and even save lives, it’s required because the simple fact is you can’t talk about solving a $2.2 trillion problem without a federal role.

We believe in an all of the above solution, public private partnerships, new sources of revenue and increased efficiencies, but at the end of the day the federal government must lead.

I congratulate and commend this committee for making that the topic of its first hearing.
The challenge we are facing is certainly beyond the capacity of any city, any county or even any state. We won’t fix the 26 percent of our bridges that are deficient or obsolete without federal leadership. Without a strong federal role, we can’t address the fact that each day, 7 billion gallons of clean drinking water is lost to leaking pipes, or that each year 850 billion gallons of sewage overflows.

Nearly 50 percent of the locks on our inland waterways are functionally obsolete and by 2020 that will increase to 80 percent unless there is a strong federal role.

Without strong federal action we will stay on the path we’re on investing two percent of our GDP in infrastructure while China invests 10 percent free falling toward a third world infrastructure.

We need a new American Marshall Plan to tackle the crisis, a new way to think about and invest in the basics of America.

We need the same inspiration, dedication and visionary leadership that made us the first country to land on the moon. Allowed us to win the Cold War, and created a beacon of promise around the globe.

If we accept this challenge we can build our economy at the same time.

The construction industry is in its worst downturn in forty years. There are two million fewer jobs in the industry today than there were in April 2006. The construction unemployment rate is currently 16.1 percent.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, there is real suffering within the construction workforce and the solution is staring us in the face.

Needed infrastructure investment would create millions of jobs. And, investing now protects tax payers because every year of inaction costs 150 billion dollars due to further deterioration.

It will take a lot of brains to figure this out and make it happen but it is also a no brainer that we must get it started now.

The decisions and actions of this committee can be life altering and as historic as the decision to build our interstate highway system.

Your challenge is great and your hurdles high and building the will to move forward won’t be easy, but you can leave behind real assets that will benefit tax payers and our entire nation for generations to come.
Hoosiers need Congress to take transportation seriously

The U.S. Senate recently passed a bill to fund the nation’s transportation systems for six years, however the shortsighted legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives only funds those systems through October of this year.

Indiana’s transportation network — from roads to bridges to public transit — is essential to the state’s economy and depended upon by more than 5 million Indiana motorists. Consider the following from the nonprofit research group TRIP and the American Association of State Transportation and Highway Officials:

- 14 percent of Indiana’s major roads are in poor condition. Driving on roads in need of repair costs Indiana motorists $2 billion a year — or $366 per motorist — in repairs and operating costs.
- 22 percent of Indiana bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- 22 percent of Indiana’s major urban highways are congested. Traffic congestion costs American motorists $121 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs.
- Vehicle travel on Indiana’s highways increased by 46 percent from 1990 to 2013.

Now more than ever it’s time for Congress to step up to the plate — no more delays, no more borrowing from other sources to minimally fund Indiana’s transportation networks and no more excuses. It’s not a choice; it’s a vital necessity to keep Indiana’s communities, job market and economy growing.

David A. Frye
Business Manager, Indiana Laborers’ District Council
Think passing a highway bill is hard? Try building a highway.

By Terry O’Sullivan, July 01, 2015, 06:00 pm

Each day thousands of construction laborers go to work — and thousands more want to — building the critical transportation infrastructure of our country.

It is grueling physical work, often performed in the worst of heat, the dampest of rain and the most penetrating of cold. It offers physical exhaustion and physical dangers. It’s not the kind of job you can make excuses for if you don’t get it done. Yet it is the kind of work has led many a father or mother to say to their child with pride, “See that? I built that.”

If only Congress could say the same.

A year ago, Congress scrambled for spare change underneath seat cushions at the Capitol to patch the Highway Trust Fund, the main way our nation invests in its roads and bridges. The best Congress could do was find nine months of resources, all with the promise that the short-term measure would allow them time to develop a long-term bill to fix our nation’s crumbling roads and bridges.

Fast-forward to today: Up against yet another deadline to act, Congress has passed another patch — the 32nd since 2009 — once again to buy more time, as if lawmakers didn’t know the last time they kicked the can down the road, they would come upon it again.

If construction laborers arrived at a jobsite and weren’t ready to work and do their job, they would rightfully be sent home. Yet that is exactly what Congress has done when it comes to the Highway Trust Fund.

The impact on America has been profound. Because of a lack of confidence in the long-term stability of the Highway Trust Fund, another summer construction season will end without the creation of additional family-supporting blue-collar jobs a stable fund can support. And needed long-term projects to enhance safety and boost economic growth will be left on the drawing board.

The Highway Trust Fund means real jobs and real money for real families. According to the U.S. Transportation Department, every federal dollar invested in transportation infrastructure generates an additional $2.54 in economic activity, and every construction job created to fix our roads and bridges results indirectly in the creation of 2.5 more jobs.

Fixing the Highway Trust Fund is about more than livelihoods and economic growth. It is, in fact, about saving lives. According to the independent transportation research group TRIP, poor road conditions, such as potholes, contribute to a third of all traffic fatalities, or about 10,000 needlessly lost lives each year.

The key cause for falling bridges and roadway deaths is not a mystery — it is because the federal gas tax has been stuck at 18.4 cents per gallon since 1993, losing 40 percent of its value. It appears that many in Congress have calculated that adjusting the tax makes a stronger political talking point against them than being
complicit in the deterioration of the very backbone of the nation. Democrats and Republicans appear to have become immune to our nation’s needs even when it costs lives, livelihoods and our place in the world.

Construction workers are ready to do their jobs. This Congress needs to do its job. It has many viable options to choose from.

Any further short-term Highway Trust Fund patches should be dead on arrival. Until Congress acts, they share responsibility for every bridge that falls, every death or injury from unrepaired roads, and every man or woman who remains trapped in jobless despair when there is great work to be done.

O'Sullivan is general president of the Laborers’ International Union of North America, with a half-million members working predominantly in the construction industry.
After a decade of research, U.S. officials are recommending new measures to protect thousands of asphalt workers from respirable crystalline silica.

More than 360,000 road and bridge construction workers in the U.S. are at risk of exposure to respirable crystalline silica, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Designing asphalt milling equipment with ventilation controls and added water sprays could lessen dust exposure, says NIOSH, which developed the recommendations with numerous labor, industry and government groups.

The 79-page Best Practice Engineering Control Guidelines to Control Worker Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica during Asphalt Pavement Milling was developed through the Silica/Asphalt Milling Machine Partnership. The partnership provides best practices to help reduce respirable silica exposures during asphalt pavement milling in highway construction.

NIOSH and partners collected 42 worker breathing zone air samples at 11 highway construction sites. Machines that adopted dust-control approaches reduced silica exposures from asphalt milling.

"Inhalation of respirable crystalline silica can cause silicosis, a debilitating and potentially fatal lung disease, and other possible adverse health outcomes," Dr. John Howard, director of NIOSH, said in a press release.

"This collaborative effort by labor, industry and government reflects the current knowledge of best practices and a partnership that has succeeded in developing recommended engineering controls for these worksites."

Dust Control

A variety of machinery is used to remove and recycle asphalt pavement, including cold-milling machines with toothed, rotating cutters that grind and remove the pavement.

These machines often generate dust containing respirable crystalline silica, which can then be blown into air the workers are breathing, according to NIOSH.

NIOSH

The addition of water sprays on machines with toothed, rotating cutters could be used to prevent or suppress dust if ventilation dust controls are not available.

NIOSH and its partners collected 42 worker personal breathing zone air samples at 11 highway construction sites. Their finding: Machines that adopted the dust control approach reduced worker exposure to silica from asphalt milling operations.

Machine Recommendations

The team made several recommendations to reduce exposures, including:

Installing ventilation controls on all new asphalt milling machines;

Maximizing cover around the machines' cutter drum and conveyor belts;
Designing an outlet that blows dust away from the worker at high speed, if the machine's ventilation control does not include a dust collector; and

Using water sprays to prevent or suppress dust if ventilation dust controls are not available.

Following the release of the document, the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) developed a shorter field guide to provide a quick reference to best practices and control recommendations, as well as a daily dust control checklist and tips for the jobsite.

**Far-Reaching Partnerships**

NIOSH is the federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations for preventing work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths.

**NIOSH**

Following the release of the document, the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) developed a shorter field guide to provide a quick reference to best practices and control recommendations, as well as a daily dust control checklist and other tips to use on the jobsite.

The Silica/Asphalt Milling Machine Partnership is coordinated by the National Asphalt Pavement Association and includes all U.S. and foreign equipment manufacturers that sell pavement-milling machines to the U.S. market.

The partnership also includes paving contractors, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers International Union of North America, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Federal Highway Administration.
FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WOWO): An urgent cry for action. Using the backdrop of a school bus smashed by falling concrete, Mayor Tom Henry and City Councilman Geoff Paddock joined union reps in lobbying for public support for fixing local bridges. They are pleading for Congress to pass a long-term highway investment bill. They hope the bus serves as a reminder of what they call America's "crumbling bridges and roads." It's part of the "Getting Schooled in Infrastructure" campaign from LIUNA - the Laborer's Union of North America. The bus is canvassing Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan.

Union officials say the current highway trust fund will go bankrupt in less than 90 days. One of the proposed sources of funding is raising gas taxes. The union's chief officer, Terry O'Sullivan said in a prepared statement, "If Congress fails, it will be due to cowardice in standing up to extremists who are willing to to destroy the critical transportation infrastructure of our country to make an ideological political point." Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry says many bridges in Allen County are in danger and now he's wants those bridges renovated.

"The primary concern of mine is the safety of citizens and the movement of commerce. If our bridges are structurally weak, we are going have to shutdown those bridges. I will not have the citizens of Fort Wayne over bridges that would not support vehicular traffic."
Laborers dispatch bridge debris-mangled bus prop for highway funding campaign

Published: Monday, 16 June 2014 21:12

Written by Concrete News

Source: Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), Washington, D.C.; CP staff

Under a “Getting Schooled in Infrastructure” banner, organized labor’s most proactive voice for federal transportation investment has kicked off a six-week tour of 22 cities and Congressional districts, a bridge debris-bearing school bus leading the charge.

The tour began at a shuttered Interstate 495 bridge in Wilmington, Del., and continues to Philadelphia, Allentown, Chambersburg, Hollidaysburg, Altoona and Pittsburgh, Pa. Through the summer the bus is scheduled to travel Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia and Maryland, concluding its journey in Washington, D.C.

The school bus and bridge debris prop reinforce a LIUNA campaign pressing Congress to pass a well-funded, long-term highway bill this year. “It’s time to stop sugar-coating this issue,” says General President Terry O’Sullivan. “We are not trying to scare people, but we are trying to wake people and Congress up.”

The Highway Trust Fund provides the largest share of transportation investment for most states, but is projected to approach a zero balance later this summer. Without Congressional action, it will completely stop dispersing road and bridge funds by October 1, the start of the federal government’s 2015 fiscal. A key reason the Highway Trust Fund is in crisis is because the federal 18.4 cent/gallon gasoline tax has not been adjusted for 21 years—a period during which rising construction materials costs and vehicle fuel efficiency gains have resulted in a 40 percent drop in federal transportation dollar buying power.

“Congress has multiple, viable options to consider,” O’Sullivan explains. “But it is time to act. The most reliable, tested investment resource for our roads and bridges is the gas tax and adjusting it will give Americans what they want and need—safer roads and bridges in their states and communities.”

LIUNA joins a broad-based coalition of transportation and business groups encouraging Congress to adjust the gas tax, AAA, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Building America’s Future among them. In addition to the bus tour, LIUNA radio ads urging Congress to act are running in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, and billboards will continue to go up in each state ahead of deficient bridges or on deteriorating roadways. Motorists and concerned citizens are directed to www.FixOurBridges.org and www.RepairOurRoads.org, where they can learn more and easily send messages to their members of Congress.
CQ Roll Call

Foxx, Labor Use I-495 Bridge to Push for Highway Fix

By John Boyd, 6/13/2014

The closed, tilting Interstate 495 bridge in Wilmington, Del., is a major prop this week in the push to get a Highway Trust Fund fix and a new highway bill through Congress.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx visited the bridge site on Friday to make the point, and invoked it in a Monday DOT blog entry in which he again warned the trust fund could run too low within two months to keep reimbursing states quickly for their road and bridge construction costs.

The Laborers’ International Union of North America is also using the Wilmington bridge in its latest campaign push for infrastructure spending. LIUNA rigged a school bus to look like it had been crushed by part of a collapsing bridge.

The union will take the get-the-point prop on a tour of many cities this summer that is billed “getting schooled in infrastructure.” It was starting the tour with a Monday visit to that I-495 bridge, and plans to end it back in Washington about the time when the highway account will fall below the DOT’s fail-safe minimum cash balance.

Next Moves for SEPTA Mediation. President Barack Obama’s weekend intervention into a strike at a major commuter rail system in Philadelphia started a process that would keep union members from again striking the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority for 240 days.

That’s because he could follow the presidential emergency board he created on Saturday, which has a 120-day mandate, with a second one before a new strike action could start, the Inquirer explains.

Federal mediators are preparing to begin hearings next week so they can send Obama a report with recommendations on how to end the labor dispute that led 400 workers to walk away Saturday. Had it continued, the strike could have had a major impact on weekday commutes into several states that are part of the Philadelphia suburbs.
The third "Rally for Roads" was held June 11 at Union Square in front of the U.S. Capitol. The rally is a gathering of labor, road builders, construction unions, industry associations and construction equipment manufacturers pressuring Congress to save the Highway Trust Fund and establish a long-term transportation bill. It's the result of efforts made by members of the transportation construction industry to help move America's infrastructure.

Key members of both the Senate and U.S. House of Representatives appeared before a crowd of several hundred.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), chair of the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, explained her disappointment with the inaction by Congress to quickly fix the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) problem and said there's no excuse to not have a robust HTF.

The HTF is expected to be insolvent in a few weeks and reimbursements to states on work already under way could come to a grinding halt. In addition, MAP-21, the current two-year transportation spending law, will expire Sept. 30.

"Are we not the greatest nation on Earth?" she asked. "How can we continue in this vein, when 50% of our roads are not where they should be and 70,000 of our bridges are deficient?"

Boxer's committee offered a six-year transportation reauthorization plan in May. "We need a long-term solution," said Boxer. "I don't want to see gimmicks. I don't want to see patches. We can't build roads or sign up for important projects if we have a three-month patch."

She reiterated her choice to replace per-gallon user fee fuel taxes with a wholesale fuel tax.
Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) echoed this preference and said about 84% of the nation’s oil consumption is for transportation.

Wyden’s committee is tasked with finding funding for the six-year transportation bill EPW advanced and also with finding a short-term fix for the HTF.

“If you put the brakes on thousands of construction projects, that’s going to be a huge economic multiplier that hurts our country,” said Wyden.

Another speaker, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), has introduced a bill to replace the gasoline tax with a barrel tax on oil, eliminate the sales tax on truck tires, and index the diesel tax to inflation.

One theme echoed throughout the morning was the decaying nature of America's infrastructure.

“You know better than I that America is falling apart and falling behind in the world,” said DeFazio. “Most every other country in the world gets it ... if you build a 21st Century infrastructure, you’re going to be able to compete in a global economy.”

Only one speaker called for an increase in the gas tax. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), member of the House Ways & Means Committee, has introduced a bill to increase this federal user fee, which hasn't changed since 1993. A day earlier, at the Transportation Construction Coalition's (TCC) legislative briefing, Rep. Blumenauer said the best and quickest fix for the HTF problem was to raise the gas tax. Sen. David Vitter (R-La.), ranking
GROWTH IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY can put millions of men and women to work, power U.S. economic growth, make our nation energy independent and build a foundation to slow global warming.

LIUNA members are ready to build our energy future. Our skilled workforce is an invaluable asset and LIUNA is a respected, proud and powerful advocate for responsible energy development at every level of government.
LIUNA members value good energy jobs because they offer family-supporting careers and strengthen our country. That’s why the organization has become one of the strongest and most valuable advocates across the nation to win approval for pipeline, renewable and other energy infrastructure projects.

LIUNA has been a leading advocate for the Keystone XL Pipeline, with thousands of members submitting testimony, attending public hearings, writing letters to their local newspapers and making sure a message about a rational energy policy is heard.

While we have been a highly visible face in the fight for Keystone XL approval, LIUNA members and leaders across America are waging the same efforts on hundreds of less publicized projects. As a result, industry leaders frequently call on LIUNA to help win project approval.

LIUNA TRAINING: SAFER AND MORE EFFICIENT

LIUNA Training is the gateway for a skilled workforce, providing career paths through the best continuing education system in the world. The curriculum is independently accredited and is offered at more than 70 fixed and mobile sites, with courses and certificates that meet or exceed all regulatory and industry requirements. Through LIUNA training programs, members gain skills and training for energy jobs, including general construction, concrete placement, roadway construction, site preparation, pipelaying, erosion control, hoisting and rigging, OSHA safety, permit-required confined space, rough terrain forklift operation, trenching and excavation safety, erecting turbines, and solar panel installation.
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LIUNA works with leaders in the oil and natural gas industry and partners with industry associations, community groups and advocacy organizations to push for safe and responsible development of oil and gas. We advocate for investment in energy infrastructure to strengthen our nation and create good jobs.

North America’s newly developed oil and gas resources have sparked rapid growth in production and export. Work hours for LIUNA members on pipelines have soared 52% from 2011 to 2013.

In the upstream sector—oil and gas exploration and production—LIUNA members primarily build, maintain and repair exploration sites and access roads.

In the midstream sector, which consists of transporting and treating natural gas and oil before it reaches users, LIUNA members currently work more than 15 million hours per year. They clear right of way, build pipelines and return the land to its original condition—or better.

LIUNA is also crucial in the downstream oil and natural gas sector. We are key to the distribution of natural gas and production of various fuels. LIUNA members in this sector also build and maintain liquid natural gas export terminals.

We Do

**NATURAL GAS**

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**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

LIUNA is experienced in energy efficiency, retrofitting schools, government buildings and commercial properties. LIUNA has worked on thousands of building retrofits, including high-profile projects such as the Empire State Building.

In addition, LIUNA has developed a presence in the residential energy efficiency field, doing weatherization and home performance work in over a dozen states. LIUNA’s Home Performance Laborer Apprenticeship has been certified by the U.S. Department of Labor.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Renewable energy accounts for 13% of U.S. energy production and is expected to reach 31% by 2040. LIUNA has been working in the renewable energy field for more than a decade across the United States and Canada, building solar, wind, hydropower and geothermal facilities. LIUNA has strong relationships with the largest hydro, solar and wind energy contractors.

In the wind industry, LIUNA members build structural concrete for turbines, construct site access roads, and do assembly and site clean-up.

LIUNA solar work hours in the western U.S. have grown from 248,000 in 2011 to 1.8 million in 2013. The work that LIUNA performs on utility scale solar projects includes driving posts, erecting arrays, mounting bracket assembly, fencing, and site and civil work.

LIUNA’s work on hydroelectric power generation includes conduit installation, shoveling, demolition, underground sewer and water, landscaping, concrete and building construction work.

**POWER GENERATION**

In the power generation industry, LIUNA builds, maintains, and modernizes power plants for fuel sources including nuclear, coal and natural gas. LIUNA also works closely with industry partners on safety, government regulation and investment.

**PIPELINE MAINTENANCE**

Gas utilities invest in the infrastructure that transports natural gas to homes and businesses. Significant work and investment is needed on many distribution pipelines. LIUNA members work 6 million hours a year repairing, maintaining, constructing and reconditioning natural gas pipelines.
LIUNA believes in an all-of-the-above energy policy that relies on a mix of fuels to create good jobs and ensure that our nation has abundant, affordable energy now and in the future.

**FIGHTING FOR AMERICA’S ENERGY FUTURE**

**AN ENERGY RENAISSANCE CAN POWER AMERICA’S ECONOMIC RESURGENCE**

**ENERGY COSTS ARE HURTING WORKING AMERICANS.**
The working poor spend an average of **20% of their income** on energy—five times the average family.

**ENERGY INDEPENDENCE IS WITHIN OUR GRASP**

- Production of natural gas and North American oil will allow the U.S. to overtake Saudi Arabia as the **LARGEST oil producer** within four years.
- By 2030 the U.S. could become completely **energy independent**.

**“ALL OF THE ABOVE” ENERGY POLICY CAN BRING AFFORDABLE ENERGY AND AN AMERICAN ENERGY RENAISSANCE**

- **$305 billion in investment and 3.5 million jobs** are estimated to be generated from natural gas extraction.
- In 2013, LIUNA members worked at least **20 million hours**—almost doubling work hours in a year.
- **Natural gas** is a bridge from higher carbon fuel to low and no-emission energy sources which can enable us to confront global warming.

**WWW.LIUNA.ORG/ENERGY**

905 16th Street NW, Washington DC 20006 • 202-737-8320

@LIUNA
Fighting for America’s Energy Future

Growth in the energy industry can put millions of men and women to work, power U.S. economic growth, make our nation energy independent and build a foundation to slow global warming. LIUNA members are building our energy future and LIUNA is a respected, proud and powerful advocate for responsible energy development.

Growth in the energy industry can create steady, reliable careers for millions of workers.

- The growth in pipeline jobs for LIUNA members can strengthen our community and our entire country. Pipeline work hours for LIUNA members, for example, have soared 52% between 2011 and 2013 – to 15 million hours a year which equates to hundreds of millions of dollars in income invested in local businesses.
- Pipeline work is a lifeline to good union jobs with family-supporting pay, healthcare and retirement benefits. It is a ladder to the middle class.
- Energy investment doesn’t only create steady, reliable construction careers. The research firm HIS found that every job created in the natural gas industry indirectly results in three more jobs. In the manufacturing sector, PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates the energy boom will create 1 million manufacturing jobs in the next 10 years.

With skilled workers and responsible contractors, pipelines are safe.

- There are 2.5 million miles of pipelines in the U.S. today. They are the safest way to transport fuels – 70 times safer than by truck, according to a ProPublica special report.
- We strongly support industry adoption of construction standards and use of responsible contractors who employ skilled, local workers.
- LIUNA members have been safely building pipelines for more than a century. We build pipelines in virtually every state. In just the last year, LIUNA members helped more than 100 pipeline operators build and maintain projects.
- Each year, LIUNA trains about 150,000 workers and invests $100 million in training workers, offering hands-on training and certifications, including 164 hours of pipeline specific instruction.
- We encourage local officials and regulatory agencies to take into account the impact a pipeline project has on the workforce by requiring disclosure of training requirements and their commitment to hire a diverse force of local residents.

Pipelines are key to making our country energy independent and addressing climate change.

- The boom in natural gas production has already reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., in part by replacing energy from coal.
- For the first time in modern history, America is on the cusp of energy independence to free us from reliance on hostile nations and regions for fuel.
- We fully support development of renewable energy sources and low-carbon emission energy. LIUNA members have built some of the nation’s largest wind and solar utility projects and are leaders in the field of energy efficiency.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

On Keystone: The President Has Thrown Working People Under the Bus of His Legacy

Washington, D.C. (November 6, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today regarding the Administration’s decision on the Keystone XL Pipeline.

President Obama today demonstrated that he cares more about kowtowing to green-collar elitists than he does about creating desperately needed, family-supporting, blue-collar jobs. After a seven-year circus of cowardly delay, the President’s decision to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline is just one more indication of an utter disdain and disregard for salt-of-the-earth, middle-class working Americans. The politics he has played with their lives and livelihoods is far dirtier than oil carried by any pipeline in the world, and the cynical manipulation of the approval process has made a mockery of regulatory institutions and government itself. We are dismayed and disgusted that the President has once again thrown the members of LIUNA, and other hard-working, blue-collar workers under the bus of his vaunted “legacy,” while doing little or nothing to make a real difference in global climate change. His actions are shameful.

In its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Keystone XL Project Executive Summary, issued in January 2014, President Obama’s own State Department concluded that building the Keystone XL “is unlikely to significantly affect the rate of extraction in oil sands.”¹ Worse, reviewing the impact of not building the Keystone XL, the same report concluded that, “the total annual GHG emissions (direct and indirect) attributed to the No Action scenarios range from 28 to 42 percent greater than for the [Keystone XL].”² But facts apparently mean as little to the President as the construction jobs he repeatedly derided as insignificant because they are “temporary.” Ironically, the very temporary nature of the President’s own job seems to be fueling a legacy of doing permanent harm to middle- and working class families.

From this decision on the Keystone XL, to the attack on quality healthcare through the so-called “Cadillac Tax,” to his efforts to ship good jobs overseas through the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Barack Obama’s disdain for working people is evident. The President may be celebrated by environmental extremists, but with this act, President Obama has also solidified a legacy as a pompous, pandering job killer.

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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.

² ibid., 34; emphasis added.
Statement of Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA, On Expected Veto of Legislation Approving Keystone XL Pipeline

Washington, D.C. (February 11, 2015) – It appears clear that President Obama will set up yet another roadblock to the Keystone XL Pipeline with a veto. Even if Congress had the votes to override a veto, we suspect the President would discover some other excuse to put politics first and keep the pipeline’s construction careers and energy locked out of reach.

To back up his expected veto, the President has correctly stated that there is “a well-established process in place” to consider approval of major infrastructure projects such as the Keystone XL Pipeline. What he didn’t say is that he and too many job-killing Democrats have perverted that process.

Each year, hundreds of energy infrastructure projects are efficiently approved after passing strict regulatory hurdles and reviews. Had Keystone been subject to the same standards, it would have already been built.

The White House needs to have the courage to own its de facto decision to block Keystone. As with too many other issues, the Administration is more concerned about the politics than the facts. If it were to approve the project based on facts, the President would have to muster the courage to stand up to billionaire contributors who undervalue careers based on working with one’s hands and over-fantasize the current capacity of other forms of energy.

Instead a crucial piece of energy infrastructure remains in an absurd limbo. It is this kind of repulsive political positioning that led voters to tell many Democrats and the Administration to go one level lower than the pipeline’s current place in purgatory.

We remain hopeful that this lifeline to good careers and energy independence will be built. If it is, it won’t be due to a legitimate review process for pipelines – it will be because it managed to survive a destructive distortion of the approval process and cowardly politicking.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

In Communities Across the Nation, LIUNA Members are Helping to Win Support For Projects That Help Build A Strong Energy Future

In Northeast and Midwest, 100s of Members Counter Irrational Opposition With Testimony, Letters and Personal Lobbying for Spectra Pipeline Projects

Washington, DC. (January 26, 2015) – In just the past week, more than 200 LIUNA members turned out to voice support for energy projects that build good, family-supporting construction careers, part of an ongoing effort by the union to make sure public officials hear about the benefits of the projects from local workers.

On Wednesday and Thursday, LIUNA members testified before the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s two hearings in support of Spectra Energy’s Algonquin Incremental Market pipeline project. More than 400 members had previously submitted comments in support of the project to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and dozens of members have lobbied their local community leaders.

In Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa and other states across the U.S., LIUNA members have provided thousands of letters of support for natural gas pipelines and submitted hundreds of hours of comment and testimony in support of projects for Spectra and other energy companies. Members have been delivering a consistent message about valuable construction careers, high-quality and safe pipeline work, and the need for affordable energy.

The union has developed a reputation among energy companies as a valuable ally in winning approval of projects due to its ability to mobilize its members, most of whom work and live in affected communities.

“The current energy boom is supporting hundreds of thousands of good construction careers,” LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan said. “That’s good for America, but it’s also in our interest and the interest of contractors to keep that going.” O’Sullivan said that means overcoming irrational opposition, but also making sure the projects are built safely with highly-skilled and trained workers.

“There’s a right way to build a pipeline and that’s why more contractors are turning to us,” he said, noting that LIUNA has trained workers in pipeline construction since its founding more than 100 years ago. Today, the union has more than 70 fixed and mobile training centers and offers 164 hours of pipeline-specific instruction.

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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.*
Injury Rate per 100 Workers

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<th>All Private Industry</th>
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Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Shale Development Supports High Wages and Worker Benefits

“Additionally, average wages of oil and natural gas production jobs were $108,000 in 2013, more than twice the average wage for all private sector industries. Since 2009, average wages from oil and natural gas production jobs have increased by 12%, compared with a 10% increase for all private sector industries.”

November 2014

UA Local 396

“We have experienced a staggering uptick in man hours out of this union hall. Over the past four years, 600,000 man hours, per year, have been attributed to shale gas related work.”

—Butch Taylor, Business Manager, UA Local 396

Laborers’ Int’l Union of North America (LiUNA)

“These are not just work hours, they’re not just statistics, and they’re not just wells and pipelines... For many, it has been a path out of poverty.”

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

“The number of fatal work injury cases in oil and gas extraction industries were over 20 percent lower in 2013...”

September 2014
Underground pipelines are the safest mode to transport energy, according to federal statistics. New projects – like the Mariner East -- will actually improve and repair an existing pipeline. Pipelines built or repurposed today are state-of-the art. They are constructed from superior materials with continual remote monitoring and automatic safety shut-off technology.

In addition, I know we can build this pipeline without sacrificing our safety or the environment, because it will be built by skilled workers like myself. I am a member of LIUNA, the Laborers' International Union of North America, an organization with more than a century of experience safely building pipelines in virtually every state and province in the U.S. and Canada.

My union and the other trades who will help build this pipeline have pipeline-specific instruction and courses to ensure that construction is safe for workers, property owners, and the environment.

I welcome the conversation and hope we will soon get to work on this project.

RON TOMASETTI, Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 158 Business Manager, Lower Paxton
On Monday, members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) showed their support of Dakota Access' proposed pipeline across Iowa at a news conference in Des Moines and delivered more than 400 letters of support to the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB).

In January, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners, filed an application for a hazardous liquid pipeline permit with the IUB, which has received hundreds of letters of both support and opposition to the proposed pipeline, which would be buried under about 340 miles of Iowa land on its route from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to a terminal hub in Illinois. Crossing 18 Iowa counties, it would go underneath about 25 miles in Boone County and carry up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil daily.

The union workers said in a statement that the pipeline, which would have a 30-inch diameter and has been dubbed the "Bakken pipeline," would mean "thousands of family-supporting jobs for Iowa laborers."

Anthony Wilkerson, a pipeline worker and shop steward with LIUNA Local 353, said after joining the union, his first job was working on a pipeline.

"If it wasn't for the pipeline jobs, I wouldn't have things I have now," he said. "My family would be living paycheck to paycheck and I wouldn't have a new home or a reliable vehicle. We are now able to put money aside for my kids' college."

Local 353 member Pamela Gilliam said she used to work at a hotel "making $8 an hour before I joined the union pipeline training classes. I'm trained in safe pipeline construction, and I'm ready to go to work. I need this job for security - financial, physical and emotional. Being able to provide for my family and put food on the table is what is most important to me."

LIUNA representative Richie Schmidt said, "A vast majority of workers on this project will be local. When local workers get hired on local infrastructure projects, it benefits the economy of the entire community."

According to union regulations, to qualify for pipeline work, workers must have at least 200 hours in the last two years or 400 hours in the last four years of work on pipeline projects. Also, they can complete a comprehensive, intensive 80-hour training course and be evaluated by an independent, accredited expert in pipeline construction.

In November, Strategic Economics Group released its 78-page economic analysis, which stated the pipeline could generate near $1.1 billion in Iowa's economy over a two-year construction period. Iowa State University economist Dave Swenson has publicly expressed doubt about SEG's economic projections.

Dakota Access is seeking landowners' permission for rights of easement on their property, 150 feet wide during construction and 50 feet after completion. If landowners refuse, the company can invoke eminent domain, or condemnation, according to state law.
Last week, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received from Dakota Access applications for sovereign lands and floodplain permits, according to Todd Rozendaal, a right of way agent in DNR’s Land and Waters Bureau property management section. Before Dakota Access can begin any work on, above or under state-owned lands and waters, it must secure both the sovereign land and floodplain permits, as required by state law. The pipeline’s route is also subject to scrutiny by the DNR’s endangered species coordinator to see if it would impact any threatened or endangered species.

Rozendaal said the 145 pages of applications for the sovereign lands and floodplain permits would also be reviewed by the DNR’s plants, fisheries and wildlife departments.

“They will review and make comments,” he said, adding that copies are also sent to Seth Moore, sovereign lands/environmental review program coordinator.

The pipeline’s proposed route in Iowa would cross four areas under DNR jurisdiction that require sovereign lands permits, one for each area. Those areas are the Big Sioux River in upper northwest Iowa, the Big Sioux Wildlife Area and the Des Moines and Mississippi Rivers. In Boone County, the pipeline company would need a floodplain permit to cross the Des Moines River near the county’s central northern border.

Rozendaal said it could take up to six weeks for the floodplain permits to be reviewed. Sovereign lands permits can be reviewed a little quicker, he said.
Organized Labor Rallies For The Job Creating Infrastructure Project
Teamsters, Electricians, Engineers, Plumbers & Pipefitters, And Others Say ‘Enough Is Enough’

TEAMSTERS: ‘Good paying jobs’ “I am writing to express the strong support of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters for the Keystone XL Pipeline… The Teamsters Union continues to believe that the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline will contribute to enhanced energy security, economic prosperity and, of critical importance, the creation of good paying jobs.” (James Hoffa, Teamsters President, Letter To Congress, 1/7/15)

- “…would employ upwards of 2,500 Teamsters and would infuse millions of dollars into local economies.” (James Hoffa, The Detroit News, 12/10/14)

ELECTRICAL WORKERS: “At a time when job creation should be a top priority, the Keystone XL Pipeline (KXL) project will put Americans back-to-work and have ripple benefits throughout the economy. During construction the project is expected to support at least 42,000 jobs and contribute $3.4 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product.” (Edwin Hill, IBEW President, Letter To Congress, 1/8/15)

OPERATING ENGINEERS: “The project is expected to generate approximately 3,000 job-years for Operating Engineers alone. With congressional approval of the pipeline, you can unleash this massive economic activity at no cost to taxpayers.” (James Callahan, IUEOE President, Letter To Reps. Boehner & Pelosi, 1/7/15)

PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS: ‘This shovel-ready project will put thousands of hardworking men and women to work at zero cost to taxpayers’ “On behalf of the 370,000 members of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the
I urge you to support H.R. 3, a bill to approve the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. This shovel-ready project will put thousands of hardworking men and women to work at zero cost to taxpayers.” (William Hite, UA President, Letter To Congress, 1/8/15)

**NORTH AMERICA’S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS:** “This vote is, pure and simple, a vote for American jobs… The livelihood of thousands of Building Trades members depend on the construction of Keystone XL.” (Sean McGarvey, BCTD President, Letter To Congress, 1/7/15)

**LiUNA:** “…this legislation is a jobs bill for the thousands of union construction workers that will build this Pipeline. If Members… want to oppose the Pipeline for partisan political reasons, they should at least have the guts to say so. To try to justify their pandering to environmental extremists and their billionaire backers by attacking the jobs that the Pipeline would create is cowardly. … Enough is enough!” (Terry O’Sullivan, LiUNA! President, Letter To Congress, 1/8/15)

- “To be relevant with the working class, Democratic leaders in Washington should put job creation and the livelihoods of working men and women ahead of the ravings of environmental wing-nuts and their deep pocketed billionaire funders. They should get out and meet the men and women who need real jobs and stop putting politics before people.” (‘Senate Democrats Assault On The Working Class,” LiUNA! 11/18/14)

**TRUMKA:** “AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka urged the new Republican-controlled Congress and the White House to get together and approve the controversial, long-delayed Keystone XL pipeline project, saying it would boost the economy. ‘There are a number of economic issues and job issues that we want them to get done. That happens to be one of them. So the answer is “yes.” We want to get every jobs issue that we can out and as many jobs created as we can to get the economy going,’ Trumka said…” (“AFL-CIO Urges Approval Of Keystone XL Pipeline,” Washington Examiner, 11/5/14)
Reforming the Affordable Care Act

LIUNA believes in access to affordable healthcare benefits for all working people. Through LIUNA’s affiliated non-profit, labor management healthcare plans, LIUNA members, retirees and their families have had the advantage of health benefits for generations. Without these plans, most of LIUNA’s members and families would have lacked health care coverage. However, harmful and unfair provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are putting these hard-earned benefits at risk.

The ACA will make healthcare more expensive and reduce benefits for workers and responsible employers.

- The so-called “Cadillac Tax” or excise tax provision in ACA is a 40 percent benefits tax that kicks in starting in 2018 on employer-provided plans with annual costs of coverage that exceed $10,200 for self-coverage and $27,500 for family coverage.

- The tax, which was promoted as a way to rein in frivolous health care perks for highly compensated executives, is expected to eventually hit every health plan covering LIUNA members as health care costs escalate faster than the thresholds.

- The burdensome tax will lead some health plan funds to slash benefits in order to avoid it.

Millions of Americans who depend on multi-employer health plans for their health insurance may lose coverage.

- The transitional reinsurance tax, another provision of the ACA, which taxes every covered individual, is estimated to cost LIUNA funds $45 million in the past year, and will cost all health funds collectively $1.3 billion on an annual basis.

- The transitional reinsurance tax will unfairly burden non-profit, labor management health plan funds and could put them out of business altogether.

LIUNA will continue to urge Members of Congress, the White House and federal agencies to reform the ACA

- The transitional reinsurance tax and the so-called Cadillac tax take money out of the pockets of working families and responsible employers to pay for subsidies that enable low-road, low-wage, and low-benefit employers to shirk their responsibilities.

- LIUNA supports legislation to repeal both the reinsurance tax and the so-called Cadillac tax as the most effective means of protecting health benefits for both our members and the millions of Americans who depends on labor management health plans.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

Secretary Clinton Announces Support for Repeal of Cadillac Tax

Time for President to End Defense of Poorly Conceived Policy

Washington, D.C. (September 29, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on Secretary Clinton’s support for the repeal of the “Cadillac” tax:

LIUNA members and their families thank Secretary Clinton for opposing this unfair tax that harms middle class workers who have fought and bled for good wages and benefits, only to see them put at risk by a short-sighted proposal in the Affordable Care Act. The 40% health benefits tax, also known as the “Cadillac” tax, on higher premium health plans, is a regressive tax that will drive down coverage, increase costs, and effectively shut down some of the multiemployer health and welfare plans that LIUNA members, retirees, and their families have come to rely on.

We’re encouraged that all of the Democratic candidates for President and a growing bipartisan movement in Congress are working to repeal the tax before its implementation in 2018. We encourage Congress to repeal this unfair and unjustified tax and call on the President to end his defense of this poorly conceived policy.

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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.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

**Supreme Court ACA Ruling Opportunity for Congress to Stop the Obama Administration Pick-Pocketing of Working People**

**Washington, D.C. (June 25, 2015)** – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on the King v. Burwell Supreme Court decision upholding the Affordable Care Act (ACA):

The ACA has enabled millions of Americans to have access to healthcare benefits which is a good thing, however, those benefits have come at the expense of and on the backs of working men and women. The Supreme Court’s ACA ruling is an opportunity for Congress to stop the Obama Administration’s pick-pocketing of working people so that the law lives up to its intention of providing access to affordable quality healthcare for all.

LIUNA will work with like-minded members of Congress to achieve more equitable policy that truly provides affordable quality healthcare for all without mandating lower quality care for the working class.

Millions of workers in multi-employer plans, including LIUNA members, have had quality coverage for generations. They collectively bargained for it, paid for it out of their paychecks, and were never a drag on our nation’s health care system. Unless Congress fixes the ACA, their plans will be destroyed through new costs and taxes, such as the 40-percent so-called “Cadillac tax” and the transitional reinsurance tax. In just one year, without covering the cost of a single doctor’s visit or hospital stay, the transitional reinsurance tax drained $45 million from LIUNA affiliated health plans. The fees and taxes make the “Affordable” in the ACA an oxymoron.

The ignorance and the arrogance of the Administration and many in Congress is evident in the disrespect shown to working men and women in the writing and implementation of the ACA. The Administration bent over backwards to make changes for corporations and insurance companies, but has totally disregarded the issues affecting the working class. We call on Congress to seize this opportunity to fix Obamacare.

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Repeal of So-Called Cadillac Tax Fixes Major ACA Flaw, Protects Millions of Americans from Benefits Cuts

Washington, D.C. (April 28, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on the bill introduced by Reps. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), Donald Norcross (D-N.J.) and Dina Titus (D-Nev.), and more than 60 original co-sponsors to repeal the 40 percent excise tax (also known as the “Cadillac tax”) in the Affordable Care Act:

Repealing the so-called Cadillac tax would fix a major flaw in the Affordable Care Act and prevent millions of Americans from facing cuts in their healthcare coverage. The tax, which was promoted as a way to rein in supposed excessive healthcare benefits for highly-paid executives, is expected to instead hit healthcare plans covering hundreds of thousands of hard working men and women, including LIUNA members, as insurance costs escalate faster than the thresholds.

The so-called “Cadillac Tax” is particularly unfair to LIUNA members and those who rely on multi-employer healthcare plans for their health coverage. These plans will be forced to slash benefits in order to avoid the tax. The tax would take money out of the pockets of workers and their employers in order to subsidize low-road employers who have shirked their responsibilities.

Healthcare reform was supposed to improve and increase coverage. This tax has the opposite effect. LIUNA urges Members of Congress to join Representatives Courtney in supporting a repeal of this harmful tax.

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A ‘Cadillac’ Tax That Looks Like a Lemon | Commentary


The Affordable Care Act was passed with the intention of fixing several parts of our health care system: rising costs, growing ranks of uninsured and exclusions for pre-existing conditions. And now, a strong bipartisan group of congressional lawmakers is standing up to prevent unintended harm to employees’ health and health coverage.

Health reform was supposed to fix what was broken, not dismantle the employer-based health system that successfully covers more than 175 million Americans. As representatives of businesses and working people, we see the 40 percent “Cadillac tax” on health benefits as a serious attack on our shared future.

The term “Cadillac tax” falsely suggests it only affects plans with “excessive” benefits. In fact, it would hit plans that are expensive simply because they cover people with higher than average costs: women, older and disabled workers, and families experiencing catastrophic health events. That was not Congress’ intent when it passed the law.

Democrats and Republicans do not agree about much when it comes to the Affordable Care Act. But both Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul D. Ryan have called for repeal of the Cadillac tax. The reason is simple: the tax is flawed both conceptually and in its construction. The cost point that triggers the tax is based on the Consumer Price Index. But Congressional Budget Office estimates show health costs will rise more than twice as fast as general inflation over the next decade. A Towers Watson survey found that 48 percent of employers expect at least one plan could trigger the tax in 2018, when it goes into effect, and fully 82 percent just five years later.

But by no means is this just a 2018 problem. The impact is being felt right now. Aon Hewitt reports that one-third of employers who have determined the impact of the tax are increasing out-of-pocket costs this year to avoid a trajectory that will trigger it in the future. Likewise, the CBO acknowledges employers will seek to avoid the tax by reducing benefits. Yet studies show that many patients forego needed care when faced with higher out-of-pocket costs. This is why further delay of this tax is not a solution; it must be repealed now.

The tax also fails to account for enormous variations in health costs. A study by Milliman found that geography had a potential 69.3 percent impact on premiums — noting that a health plan costing $9,189 annually in one part of the country could cost $15,556 elsewhere. Ironically, high value plans in lower cost locations avoid the tax, while lesser value plans in higher cost areas are subjected to it.

Analysis by Ernst & Young shockingly demonstrated that in certain high-cost states such as Georgia, Alaska, West Virginia and Wyoming, a silver-level plan in the small business exchanges will trigger the tax in 2018 or shortly thereafter. Clearly, Congress did not intend to tax plans paying 70 cents of every dollar in covered services — plans that the ACA expressly requires be offered to small employers.

Assumptions underlying the estimated $91 billion to be generated by the tax are also concerning. The CBO projects three-quarters will come from employers replacing health benefits with taxable wages. If the CBO is correct, working Americans will be asked to pay more. If the CBO is wrong, the revenue may never materialize and employees will lose valuable benefits without a corresponding increase in pay.
Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., has authored a bipartisan bill to repeal the tax. Along with a measure introduced by Rep. Frank C. Guinta, R-N.H., far more than a majority of House members have co-sponsored legislation to eliminate the tax. Momentum is building in the Senate, as well, as Sens. Dean Heller, R-Nev., and Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., recently introduced a companion to the Courtney bill, and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, just released his repeal proposal. Both bills are joined by several cosponsors, so it is also a very bipartisan effort in the Senate.

How to improve the health system is the subject of continued debate. In the case of the “Cadillac tax,” Congress and the Obama administration can come together now in a bipartisan fashion to do what is right for working people and businesses and repeal the tax. They should act without delay.

*James A. Klein is president of the American Benefits Council, whose member companies sponsor or administer health and retirement plans covering millions of Americans. Terry O’Sullivan is general president of the Laborers’ International Union of North America, representing a half-million members in the construction industry. Both groups are among the organizers of the Alliance to Fight the 40, a diverse coalition of public and private sector employers and labor unions.*
Study: Obamacare Cadillac Tax Forcing Employers to Cut Benefits

90 percent taking action to avoid penalty

BY: Bill McMorris, October 8, 2015

Nine out of 10 large companies are working to avoid Obamacare’s so-called Cadillac Tax on health insurance plans if lawmakers fail to reform the law, according to a new study.

The American Health Policy Institute, a non-partisan think tank, found that nearly every major employer in the country is taking steps to avoid the tax, which targets comprehensive health plans deemed to be luxurious by regulators. The law will hike taxes by $68 billion for American workers.

“The excise tax is already driving many employers to fundamentally reassess their health care plans. While the tax was intended to reduce health care spending, its impact in the real world is being felt by workers who are seeing the value of their health care plans reduced,” it says.

The institute surveyed major employers across the country about whether any of their health plans would be affected by the tax, as well as what steps they are taking to deal with the law. Nearly 20 percent of companies reported that they were slashing benefits to avoid triggering the law. The policy, the report says, could lead to “a potential collapse of the employer-sponsored health insurance.”

“The excise tax continues to be an important health policy issue and is going to impose real costs on both employees and employers alike,” the report says. “Some health care policy theorists say that the excise tax will curtail health care expenditures. Health care policy realists understand that solving the excise tax facing many employers as well as making changes to future payment policies are necessary to stave off a potential collapse of the employer-sponsored health insurance.”

The tax was supposed to go into effect in 2013, but lawmakers pushed back implementation to 2018. It has drawn bipartisan outrage from businesses and unions. Laborers International Union president Terry O’Sullivan has famously called for the repeal of Obamacare if lawmakers do not amend the tax.

Nearly the entire House GOP opposes the 40 percent tax, while Democrats, including frontrunner Hillary Clinton, have bucked the administration line and called for repeal.

Nearly three out of four employers said they would not raise wages to compensate for health benefit reduction, while only 16 percent said they embraced the idea. About 30 percent said they will get hit by the tax in 2018 and 50 percent said they would be affected by the law come 2023. The law will not just hit the luxurious “Cadillac” plans, but nearly every worker over the next 15 years.

“Because the threshold for the excise tax increases over time by the CPI and not medical inflation, by 2031, the cost of today’s ‘average plan’ will hit the threshold for the excise tax,” the report says. “Although the excise tax may have been sold as a tax on overly generous ‘Cadillac’ health benefits, in reality it is impacting ordinary health plans that are expensive simply because they are offered in high-cost areas, or because they cover large numbers of people whose health costs are higher than average—women, older and disabled workers, and families experiencing catastrophic health events.”
The ‘Cadillac tax’ is deeply flawed

Daniel Acker/BLOOMBERG, July 29 at 5:30 PM

The July 26 editorial “Don’t recall the ‘Cadillac tax’” wrongly asserted that the tax will affect only those with unusually rich health-care plans. The tax will likely affect most health-care plans. According to employer consulting firm Towers Watson, 48 percent of employers believe the plans they provide will be affected by 2018, the first year the tax will be implemented. And that could rise to 82 percent by 2023, Towers Watson found. This is not a “Cadillac” tax — it is a tax that will affect most working Americans. It will not lower the cost of care; it will put quality care out of reach and lower the level of care. The editorial attacked workers who have bargained for and paid for health care through their unions. For millions of workers in multi-employer health-care plans — who have responsibly contributed from their own pockets for generations to obtain quality care and ensure they were not a drag on the system — minimizing the effect of the tax is insulting.

It’s time to stop pretending the tax will affect only someone else. It is not a minor provision, and it is deeply flawed. Unless repealed, it will distort, rather than reform, health care.

Terry O’Sullivan, Washington

The writer is general president of the Laborers’ International Union of North America.
The Davis-Bacon Act and Prevailing Wage Laws

Our country is about more than just low wage jobs. What makes America different is that it's about the chance to get ahead and prosper. Davis-Bacon and state and local laws establishing a wage floor on construction projects are a tried and true way to protect paychecks, defend taxpayers and create jobs.

Davis-Bacon and prevailing wage laws protect paychecks and allow working people to get ahead and prosper.

- Davis-Bacon and prevailing wage laws ensure that taxpayer-funded projects pay local prevailing wages and benefits.
- Davis-Bacon prevents government spending from driving down local wages and living standards.
- Corporate interests and their advocates in Congress and in state governments who are working to repeal or weaken Davis-Bacon laws are really out to cut workers’ paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.

Davis-Bacon and prevailing wage laws are good for the community not just union workers.

- Where unions are strong, the prevailing wage is likely to be close to what local union workers make. Where unions are not strong, the prevailing wage is likely to be lower than what local union workers earn.
- 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.
- Corporations do not pass the money they save from cuts in labor costs on to taxpayers. In fact, when corporations block prevailing wage laws they destroy jobs and cost taxpayers.

The research is clear: prevailing wage laws don’t increase costs for taxpayers.

- A study of school construction costs in Great Plains states showed that prevailing wage laws do not raise construction costs – but repealing such laws hurt taxpayers and workers. After Kansas’ prevailing wage law was repealed, wages fell 11 percent and jobsite injuries rose 19 percent, according to the study prepared for the Kansas Senate.
- Highway construction costs are actually higher when workers are paid less, according to an analysis of Federal Highway Administration data by the Construction Labor Research Council.
- Cost overruns are more likely without prevailing wage laws. In Utah, a repeal of the state prevailing wage law was followed by a tripling of cost overruns, which was attributed to lower productivity and a less skilled workforce.
Trash Strike Continues as Workers Say They Need Higher Wages

Walkout in its sixth day but collections do not appear affected

BY MIRANDA S. SPIVACK Published: 12/31/14

A trash hauling strike in southern Montgomery and in Howard counties entered its sixth day on Wednesday with no signs that it would end soon.

Affected communities are: Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Kensington, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Silver Spring and Wheaton. A complete list is available by clicking here. However, in most of those communities, trash pickup has occurred on schedule, according to residents and a county spokeswoman.

The dispute, between Unity Disposal & Recycling and its unionized workers is about wages and benefits..Unity serves about 46,000 households per week in Montgomery County. The county pays about $21 million to Unity and two other companies – Ecology Services and Potomac Disposal – to collect trash, recycling, yard waste, bulk trash and scrap metal. The workers for these companies are not county employees.

Unity employees voted to form a union with Laborers’ Union Local 657 nine months ago but efforts to negotiate a first contract with about 120 workers have stalled. About half of those workers have gone on strike, said Michael Blain, spokesman for the Laborers’ Union, which represents Unity’s employees.

At issue in the strike against Unity are wages and benefits. Trash haulers who ride on the back of trucks earn about $85 per day, while drivers are paid about $120, said Blain.

Workers are looking for pay increases, less expensive health insurance and retirement benefits, which he said they currently lack.

Unity has been using replacement workers, Blain said, and he questioned whether they had been sufficiently trained and made aware of the county’s safety regulations.

London Bryson, a spokeswoman for Laurel-based Unity, declined to respond to questions but issued a written statement:

"Unity Disposal respects the rights of the employees to voice their concerns, but wishes they would do so at the bargaining table," the statement. “In light of the Union’s refusal to participate in collective negotiations, it appears to Unity that this strike is more about a show than about achieving an agreement for the employees. “

Blain said employees had gone on strike partly because Unity’s most recent offer would, in some cases, reduce workers’ wages.

The office of Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett has not commented on the strike other than to say that collections are not affected and to point residents to the website that the county has set up to provide information about trash pickup.

In October 2013, workers at Unity and Potomac Disposal went on strike for two weeks. Leggett stepped into that dispute to try to broker an agreement.
Our Right to Prosper and So-Called Right-to-Work

Our country is about more than just low wage jobs. What makes America different is that it's about more than work; our country is about the opportunity to get ahead and prosper. The corporate-backed elitists pushing so-called “right-to-work” are out to cut your pay, destroy your pension and weaken your union. It’s a well-funded nationwide effort and we must fight to stop them.

Our Right to Prosper is under attack by right-to-work laws that undermine your union, threaten training programs, cut wages, destroy good benefits, and jeopardize pensions.

- “Right-to-work” allows workers to opt-out of their fair share of union dues, stretching your union to the breaking point by forcing it to cover “free riders.”
- “Right-to-work” will deprive you of the family-supporting wages you deserve – workers in “right-to-work” states make about $5,300 a year less than workers in free-bargaining states.
- The health of you and your family will suffer – in “right-to-work” states, 28 percent more people lack health insurance. And your pension will be threatened as companies run away from their obligations.
- “Right-to-work” laws can be deadly. The rate of workplace deaths is 36 percent higher in “right-to-work” states. Workers in those states also lose out on workers’ compensation.

“Right-to-work” is bad for your employer, too – it gives the upper hand to “low road” companies that offer poor pay and benefits and no career ladder. They can also devastate your local economy.

- Employers like yours negotiate with a union for a reason – they get access to a skilled, trained workforce. “Right-to-work” laws hurt their ability to compete on the quality, safety and productivity advantages they offer by using union workers.
- The good wages you make – the wages your union negotiated – allow you to spend more money at local shops, restaurants and other businesses. By weakening unions and putting those wages at risk, “right-to-work” laws can hurt your community’s economy as well.

America is about prosperity for all but “right-to-work” laws hit the pocketbooks of women and minorities hard by threatening their unions.

- Latino union members earn $45 more each week than nonunion Latinos, while unionized African Americans earn 30 percent more each week than those not in a union.
- “Right-to-work” laws undo the major gains unions have made in closing the gap between men’s and women’s pay. While the overall gender gap is 32 percent, it is only 5 percent among men and women who are in a union.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

*Tide Turning in the War Against Middle Class Americans
So-called Right to Work Blocked in Missouri*

**Washington, D.C. (September 17, 2015)** – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on the defeat of right-to-work in the Missouri legislature:

The vote against so-called right-to-work in the Missouri legislature is a victory for all American workers, and especially for the leaders and thousands of members of LIUNA in Missouri who rallied, wrote letters, and called their state representatives to stop this bill.

The victory, where even a Republican majority legislature failed to override the governor’s veto, signals that the attempts to undermine unions and lower wages and working conditions, can and will be blocked.

The tide is turning in the war against middle class Americans.

It is by having the freedom to join together in a union that construction workers build careers, earn family-supporting pay, and stay safer on the job. It is through unions that wage disparities are reduced or eliminated.

The Missouri legislators - both Republican and Democrat - who blocked so-called right-to-work should be commended for protecting those rights and dealing a setback to the tycoons whose vision for America is to reduce the working class to an underclass with fewer rights, fewer opportunities and dramatically increased income inequality.

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Statement of LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan on So-Called Right-to-Work Law an Assault on Working People in Wisconsin

Washington, D.C. (March 9, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on Wisconsin Gov. Walker’s action to sign so-called "right-to-work" into law:

With today’s attack on the middle class by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, half of the states in our nation have now implemented so-called “right-to-work” legislation. That leaves only half of the country in states where working people have the freedom to prosper by joining together in unions.

The tide of anti-prosperity legislation, financed by far-right extremist tycoons who buy governors such as Walker, is particularly an assault on those who work with their hands and service the great state of Wisconsin. It is by having the freedom to join together in a union that construction workers build careers, earn family-supporting pay and stay safer on the job. It is through unions that wage disparities are reduced or eliminated.

As the Wisconsin governor darts around the world seeking money for his Presidential campaign, he has made clear that his vision for America is one of dramatically increased income inequality, class warfare waged by the rich, and shrinking rights for all but a wealthy elite.

We will continue to inform and mobilize our members to fight for America. Our country is not about deceptive slogans and low-wage work, but rather about opportunity and the freedom of our families to prosperity.

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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.
It’s no coincidence that the rise of the middle class in America coincided in large part with the rise of unions – workers who organized together for higher wages, better working conditions, and the benefits and protections that most workers take for granted today. So it’s inexcusable that, over the past several years, just when middle-class families and workers need that kind of security the most, there’s been a sustained, coordinated assault on unions, led by powerful interests and their allies in government.

So I’m deeply disappointed that a new anti-worker law in Wisconsin will weaken, rather than strengthen workers in the new economy. Wisconsin is a state built by labor, with a proud pro-worker past. So even as its governor claims victory over working Americans, I’d encourage him to try and score a victory for working Americans – by taking meaningful action to raise their wages and offer them the security of paid leave. That’s how you give hardworking middle-class families a fair shot in the new economy – not by stripping their rights in the workplace, but by offering them all the tools they need to get ahead.
Comprehensive Immigration Reform Should Protect All Workers

LIUNA was founded more than a century ago by immigrants struggling for citizenship and to improve their lives. These proud men and women helped build our nation, just as many immigrants do today. But our current immigration policy is failing both citizens and immigrants.

LIUNA supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes an earned path to citizenship for undocumented workers.

- Workers who pay taxes and contribute to their communities and whose only crime is lacking documents deserve a chance to earn U.S. citizenship.

- An earned path to citizenship should be realistic and achievable by those who have the ambition to become U.S. citizens. A lengthy waiting period, onerous penalties and a cumbersome bureaucracy should be avoided or reform will fail.

Reform should include strong and humane enforcement of our borders.

- A common sense approach should focus first on stopping criminals at the border. While border security is crucial, it is not the only step. Nearly half of unauthorized immigrants arrive lawfully, but overstay their visas. Reform should include an employer system to verify an immigrant’s work authorization, but the current system should be overhauled to ensure accuracy, to penalize employers who misuse the system, and to provide workers due process.

- The unity of immigrant families should be a key factor in the enactment of an earned path to citizenship for undocumented workers.

Labor standards must be enforced to protect workers’ rights so that immigration does not depress wages or working conditions.

- Our current immigration system allows unscrupulous employers to engage in wholesale worker exploitation, using fear of deportation to cheat workers out of wages or cut corners on safety.

LIUNA is opposed to guest worker programs in the construction industry.

- The U.S. has yet to prove it can implement a fair guest worker program. From the Bracero program to current temporary work visas, guest worker programs create a class of workers who are used to drive wage standards down for all workers.

- An independent commission should be established to assess and manage the future flow of immigrants, based on actual, proven labor market shortages.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: communications@liuna.org or 202-942-2246

Statement of LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan on Immigration Reform and Homeland Security

Washington, D.C. (Feb. 3, 2015) – We are proud that Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Senate rejected the attempt to hold the Department of Homeland Security hostage in order to reverse President Obama’s executive order on immigration. Protecting immigrants from exploitation and uncalled-for deportation honors the spirit and principle of our nation and can help raise living standards for all workers.

Congress should focus on the country’s needs. That means funding the Department of Homeland Security and passing true comprehensive immigration reform – rather than using either in a repulsive political game.

As an organization founded by immigrants, LIUNA has long been a fierce advocate for comprehensive immigration reform which secures our borders, provides a path to citizenship, levels the playing field for honest employers and allows everyone in America – immigrants and non-immigrants – to work free from harassment, intimidation or exploitation.

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U.S. House Vote on DHS Appropriations Bill Filled with Anti-Immigrant Amendments is Irresponsible and Offensive
Statement of LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan

Washington, D.C. (January 15, 2015) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today regarding yesterday’s U.S. House of Representatives vote to revoke President Obama’s executive order to provide immigration relief as an amendment to a Department of Homeland Security Funding Bill:

It is a great disappointment that instead of taking real action on immigration reform, the U.S. House of Representatives included anti-immigrant amendments in an attempt to dismantle the President’s Executive Order which would provide some relief to immigrant families. Tying the attack on immigration relief to continued funding of our nation’s security is offensive and irresponsible.

LIUNA has long been a fierce advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. We are a union founded by immigrants and believe that the fight for immigrant rights is not just critical for immigrant workers, but for all workers. Protecting immigrants from the threat of exploitation and deportation will help raise the living standards of all workers.

In 2013, we strongly supported the Senate’s bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation. Unfortunately, politics have trumped the need for real reform.

Comprehensive immigration reform that provides a path to citizenship, includes border security, levels the playing field for honest employers and allows everyone in America – immigrants and non-immigrants – to work free from harassment, intimidation or exploitation is urgently needed.

Congress should start working as soon as possible to pass comprehensive immigration that provides a path to citizenship or a way to address future immigration that protects all workers and stop playing politics with people’s lives.

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Pres. Obama Immigration Order Some Relief
Congress Must Tackle Comprehensive Reform

Washington, D.C. (November 21, 2014) – Terry O’Sullivan, General President of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – made the following statement today on President Obama’s executive order to provide relief to immigrant families:

LIUNA has long been a fierce advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. We are a union founded by immigrants and believe that the fight for immigrant rights is not just critical for immigrant workers, but for all workers. Comprehensive immigration reform that provides a path to citizenship, levels the playing field for honest employers and allows everyone in America – immigrants and non-immigrants – to work free from harassment, intimidation or exploitation is urgently needed. Last year, we strongly supported the Senate’s bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation and had hoped the House would pass a similar bill. Unfortunately, politics trumped the need for real reform, and so now we find ourselves in a place that in order to give much needed relief to workers and their families an Executive Order, which is limited by law, is what is put forward as a solution.

While we are pleased that the President’s Order will provide some relief to five million immigrant families, it does not encompass all of the principles that LIUNA has strongly advocated for years. The Executive Order is no substitute for real reform that provides a path to citizenship or a way to address future immigration that protects all workers. We also are concerned with the temporary nature of the Executive Order and the uncertainty that it will continue to bring to many families.

We too are frustrated with Congress’ inability to take action on this critical issue, and we believe that Congress should start working as soon as possible to pass comprehensive immigration legislation once and for all. It is time to stop playing politics with people’s lives and livelihoods—Congress must pass comprehensive immigration reform.

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Employee Misclassification

Tax Evading Employers Costing Taxpayers, Busting Government Budgets

Unscrupulous employers are evading state and federal taxes by incorrectly classifying employees as independent contractors – leaving millions of workers without protections and benefits and taking needed revenue from state and federal coffers.

Employee misclassification is rampant and costs states and the federal government billions of dollars, which taxpayers must make up.

- In its last comprehensive review, the IRS estimated that about 15 percent of employers misclassified a total of 3.4 million employees as independent contractors, resulting in an estimated revenue loss of $1.6 billion.
- The U.S. Department of Labor has found that 10-30 percent of employers audited had misclassified employees.
- Illegal misclassification costs states millions of dollars in lost unemployment insurance revenue. Just in Illinois, for example, the National Alliance for Fair Contracting estimates that the unemployment insurance system lost an average of $39.2 million every year from 2001 to 2005 in unemployment insurance taxes.

Misclassification hurts law-abiding employers.

- Employers who evade taxes through misclassification can bid for work with 15-30 percent lower payroll costs.
- Misclassification shifts the burden of paying for workers’ compensation premiums to employers who do play by the rules.
- Employers who provide healthcare benefits to employees are at even greater disadvantage.

Misclassified workers are denied many workplace protections and benefits that honest, lawabiding employers provide.

- Misclassified employees must pay self-employment taxes on top of their personal income taxes.
- If a misclassified employee is injured on the job, the worker may have difficulty accessing workers’ compensation and laid-off workers may not be eligible for unemployment compensation.
- Misclassified workers do not have overtime wage and hour protections.
- Misclassified employees do not receive benefits such as health insurance or paid holidays.

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Construction Jobs Create Permanent Careers

The construction industry is a key driver of the U.S. economy, generating more than a half-trillion dollars in economic activity each year and putting more than 6 million men and women to work. While projects begin and end, the impact on our nation is permanent, both through the family-supporting careers the industry supports and the legacy of what we build.

Construction work and construction projects are in no way temporary – they build permanent careers.

- As part of the debate over building the critical energy infrastructure of America, some are denigrating the hard work of millions of men and women in the construction industry by labeling their jobs “temporary.”

- What they label a “temporary” sector of our economy adds 5 to 9 percent annually to our nation’s gross domestic product – that’s more than a half-trillion dollars a year. Those dollars include paychecks that quickly circulate through communities, stimulating more job creation. It’s one reason President Obama and others consistently tout infrastructure projects – almost certainly consisting of “temporary” jobs – as the best way to grow our economy.

- Either these critics are very poorly informed about the construction industry or they are being cynically deceitful to score political points. Of course construction projects are not routinely torn down and rebuilt upon completion.

While many industries are undergoing change that degrades the quality of jobs, the construction industry is a success story of how to create good, family-supporting permanent careers.

- By providing a pool of ready and highly-trained crafts-workers, the union construction sector has made it possible to have a permanent career building America. When a project is complete, workers are able to move on to the next project through their union hiring hall.

- These projects help build a skilled, productive workforce. LIUNA alone provides hundreds of hours of training to tens of thousands of workers through more than 70 fixed and mobile training centers.

- The training that construction crafts workers receive and upgrade for each job allows them to move from project to project, supporting families, paying mortgages and building middle-class lives.

The job of building America – our cities, energy systems, roads, bridges and transit systems – is not temporary work. It strengthens families and communities and provides lasting assets and a legacy for generations to come.

- The men and women who make construction their career create a permanent legacy that has made America great – from landmarks such as the Hoover Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge and the Empire State Building, to the critical transportation and energy infrastructure that keeps our nation running.