



LIUNA!

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March 4, 2025

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Hon. Arthur J. Corvese
Chairperson, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
c/o: HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

Re: Support for H 5505 Labor and Payment Debts by Contractors

Dear Chairperson Corvese:

On behalf of the over 10,000 members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) in Rhode Island, I write in **SUPPORT** of **H 5 5505**. This legislation prohibits employers paying the equivalent "cash" payment in lieu of providing bona fide retirement and/or pension benefits to employees on public construction projects. This practice, for far too long, has benefited irresponsible contractors and hurt skilled workers who do not have access to retirement benefits through their employer.

The "cash" payments in lieu of benefit payments, increases the chances of nefarious actions by unscrupulous employers including wage theft and the potential for erroneous public bids, undermining the public procurement process and putting taxpayers at risk. To protect the interests of taxpayers on publicly funded construction projects, **H 5505** ensures a level playing field for all contractors to compete on experience, skill, and productivity, not on the wages and benefits of workers, which is the intent of the prevailing wage statute. This bill creates a pathway to much-needed retirement benefits and security for the workers who build our public infrastructure.

Our members and their families are the backbone of the State of Rhode Island. And together, we will always stand on the side of protecting family-supporting wages and benefits. I respectfully ask the committee to **SUPPORT** this legislation to make certain there is a level-playing field for contractors and workers in public construction. Thank you in advance for your consideration and your attention to so many issues that affect our members and the working families of Rhode Island.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

DONATO A. BIANCO, JR.
Vice President
and New England Regional Manager

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