

Feel the Power

Immigration Reform

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

LIUNA was founded more than a century ago by proud immigrants who were tired of the abuse and exploitation of unscrupulous employers. They banded together to improve their lives, their families' lives, and to make life better for all those who follow in their footsteps.

Our current immigration policy is failing both citizens and immigrants. We continue to fight for immigration reform and will not stop until it gets done. In 2013, LIUNA supported the Senate's bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation and had hoped the U.S. House of Representatives would pass similar legislation. Unfortunately, politics have trumped the need for real reform. We have found ourselves in a position that, in order to give much needed relief to workers and their families, an Executive Order, which is limited by law, is what has been put forward as a solution. Congress's inability to take action on this critical issue is not an acceptable path. Comprehensive immigration legislation needs to pass. Getting immigration reform done is not only the right thing to do, it is the necessary thing to do.

LABOR PROTECTIONS

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, driving down wages, using fear of deportation to cheat workers out of wages or cut corners on safety. LIUNA supports the Power ACT which ensures workers' ability to exercise their labor rights and hold employers accountable without fear of retaliation.

NO EXPANSION OF GUEST WORKERS

LIUNA opposes guest workers programs in the construction industry. With continued high unemployment in the sector, there is no shortage of workers willing to work in construction careers. Congress should not expand guest worker programs, let alone create new ones that will easily increase the number of exploited workers. The US 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.

LIUNA OPPOSES:

HR 1147 – Legal Workforce Act. This legislation introduced by Lamar Smith (R-TX) would establish an employment eligibility verification system (EEVS), requiring employers and Union hiring halls to electronically verify their workforce in a phase-in deadline process with harsh penalties, furthermore allowing employers to voluntarily re-verify their employees.

HR 863 – Simplifying Technical Aspects Regarding Seasonality Act of 2015 (STARS) Act. Introduced by Rep. James Renacci (R-OH), this legislation codifies "seasonal employee" under the IRS to 6 months. This creates a broad misuse of the interpretation of seasonal work which could include construction workers. It allows unscrupulous employers to increase the use of guest worker programs and avoid providing health care to those workers thereby gaining an unfair advantage over employers that provide health care to their workers.