

# LiUNA!

*Feel the Power*

# 2022

Candidate Questionnaire



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LIUNA, the Laborers' International Union of North America, is a strong and proud union of workers founded by immigrants in 1903. A half-million strong, we are united through collective bargaining agreements, which help us earn family supporting pay, good benefits and the opportunity for advancement and better lives. Chartered as a construction union, LIUNA is also one of the most diverse and effective unions representing public employees, federal employees, and service contract workers.

Members run LIUNA, electing officers at all levels and participating in the day-to-day affairs of their Local Unions. Members set priorities for contracts and are key to the union's growth and success. The mission of LIUNA is implemented through nine Regions, more than forty District Councils, and 380 Local Unions.

LIUNA also represents over 70,000 public employees. LIUNA Public Employees provide critical health care services, keep our parks clean, pick up our trash, maintain our roads, and respond to emergencies both foreign and domestic. The National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) is affiliated with LIUNA and has served as a key union in the postal community for more than one-hundred years, representing 40,000 Mail Handlers employed by the United States Postal Service.

LIUNA members engage in political action to protect their livelihoods. Every year tens of thousands of LIUNA members make personal calls, talk to fellow members, and visit Congress to advocate for good jobs and to hold elected leaders accountable. LIUNA members also vote and give of their hard-earned wages in voluntary political contributions to the LIUNA national Political Action Committee. The candidates who benefit from LIUNA's political support are from both political parties, and they understand that LIUNA works with those who work with us.

LIUNA members, retirees, and their families are looking for a candidate who will do more than support our wages and benefits. We are looking for a champion of the working class who can be counted on to fight for LIUNA members.

# Infrastructure

With enactment of the bipartisan infrastructure deal, the Congress and President Biden made a historic level of Federal investment into our nation's crumbling infrastructure. These investments in public infrastructure will create benefits that are broadly shared by people, businesses, and the environment while providing LIUNA members with good, family sustaining, work opportunities.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will help rebuild America's transportation networks, expand access to clean drinking water, increase access to high-speed internet, advance environmental justice, and invest in economically disadvantaged communities. It will help business grow and compete in the global economy by strengthening supply chains through long overdue improvements for our nation's ports, airports, rail, and roads. The IIJA will also drive the creation of good-paying union jobs and grow the economy sustainably for decades to come.

However, the benefits of these investments can be undermined if the implementation of the law is not thoughtful or if bad actors undermine the intention of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Recent actions by some states to undermine minimum federal standards and congressional attempts to subvert wage and safety requirements are sure to continue. LIUNA supports vigilance and oversight in the administration of this historic law while urging elected officials not to turn this historic investment into a partisan issue. **Infrastructure investments should never be a partisan issue!**

Many of the goals of the IIJA can be multiplied with the increased use of community workforce agreements (CWAs). When appropriate, these agreements bring various community stakeholders together to work out details around workforce equity, training and career development, and environmental justice. LIUNA supports the use of CWAs and encourages our allies to resist attempts to limit or prohibit their use.

While the passage of the IIJA, makes historic levels of federal investment into America's physical infrastructure, these investments are only one part of the financing puzzle. States, localities and the private sector should also continue to make appropriate investments into infrastructure assets. LIUNA supports the use of Public/Private Partnerships (PPPs) when appropriate, and as long as they are not used to drive down standards for communities or workers. With the appropriate safeguards, PPPs can help fill a niche in the financing of our nation's infrastructure needs.

## QUESTIONS:

**If elected, will you support the investments made by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act?**

**Will you support prevailing federal wage requirements and safety standards on projects funded by the Act?**

**Will you oppose efforts to limit the use of Community Workforce Agreements on projects funded by the Act?**

**Do you support the use of Public/Private Partnerships, with appropriate safeguards, for the financing of some infrastructure projects?**

## **Energy and The Environment**

The second largest sector of work for LIUNA members is the energy sector. Our members go to work every day developing our nation's abundant energy resources and keeping the lights on for millions of Americans across the country. Our work reflects our position when it comes to energy; an all-of-the-above approach to energy policy. Our members build windfarms, solar fields, hydro power plants, nuclear facilities, and pipelines. The natural gas pipeline industry has provided millions of work hours and helped tens of thousands of members start careers, while helping to decrease our nation's net greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, it is the use and build out of natural gas infrastructure that is helping the push to move towards a cleaner energy future.

As our nation continues to move away from fossil fuels, significant investments will be required within our nation's renewable energy industry, such as wind, solar, and nuclear. The global drive to the electrification of the transportation sector and the production of renewable energy as a whole is having a major impact on the world economy. In order to remain competitive, it is imperative we ensure the jobs created by the renewable industry provide the same benefits and opportunities as the fossil fuels sector has done for over a half-century. That means, including proper labor standards on wind and solar projects. Furthermore, the production and manufacturing of these large-scale projects require critical mining materials,

which can be found right here, in the US. Mining these vital natural resources domestically can ensure proper job quality for the necessary workforce and the highest environmental standards.

## QUESTIONS:

**Where do you stand on responsible natural gas extraction and energy development? Do you oppose political efforts to stop the development of domestic energy?**

**Do you support including labor standards on renewable energy projects like wind and solar?**

**Do you support “buy America” provisions for the mining of the necessary natural resources to build renewable energy?**

## Labor Standards

### Support Collective Bargaining/Oppose Right-to-Work

Collective bargaining should be the cornerstone of an employee’s wages, benefits, and working conditions. It provides workers the opportunity to have a say on decisions affecting their pay, working conditions and benefits. Posing under the intentionally misleading term “right-to-work,” collective bargaining is under attack by right wing extremists who are pushing for legislation at the state and federal level to deny workers the right to join unions.

## QUESTIONS:

**Do you support the right of all workers to organize and collectively bargain? If so, what specific steps would you take to protect this right for private sector workers, public sector workers, and federal employees?**

**Where do you stand on federal right-to-work bills, and why?**

## Davis Bacon/Prevailing Wages

Davis Bacon Prevailing Wage laws prevent cheap, low-road contractors from undermining the wages and benefits of workers on federally assisted construction projects. Prevailing wage laws ensure that labor costs are uniform, allowing contractors to compete for public projects based on skill, productivity, and management abilities, not on who can scrape together the cheapest workforce. Davis Bacon not only provides needed stability in the construction industry, it also preserves the living standards of all construction workers and their families throughout the country. LIUNA opposes any effort to weaken or repeal the Davis Bacon Act. The sound administration and robust enforcement of the Davis Bacon Act is crucial to its effectiveness in protecting workers and responsible contractors. The Service Contract Act similarly requires prevailing wages on contracts entered into by federal agencies through the use of service employees.

## QUESTIONS:

**Do you support Davis Bacon prevailing wage requirements, and do you support the DOL in its efforts to improve the administration and enforcement of Davis Bacon? If so, what steps would you take to protect these requirements?**

## **How will you support the Service Contract Act to ensure fair wages for workers?**

### **Apprenticeships**

LIUNA's apprenticeship programs train U.S. workers to become highly skilled, well-paid construction workers through a debt free, technologically advanced education. These earn as you learn programs pay family sustaining wages and provide health care and retirement benefits. During the previous Administration, U.S. Department of Labor would have allowed so-called "Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs), which" would have driven down labor standards and wages. Thankfully, construction was carved out of the original IRAP program, and more recently, the Biden Administration has ended the misguided IRAP program altogether. Now we need to focus on strengthening and expanding proven Registered Apprenticeship programs like the ones that LIUNA has had for decades.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

**What steps would you take to support expanding access to Registered Apprenticeship programs?**

### **Voting Rights/Fair Elections**

Voting rights and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. LIUNA supports measures that protect every American's right to vote and ensure the government's responsibility to protect this right. We saw our democracy attacked on January 6, 2021. It is our responsibility to defend it. Unfortunately, in the past decade, over a dozen states have passed new laws restricting the right to vote, using the myth of voter fraud as a pretext.

For decades LIUNA has stood side by side with civil rights activists, including the late Congressman John Lewis, as they marched and took to the streets to fight for the critical issue of voting rights. LIUNA will continue to speak out against

discriminatory laws and practices that attempt to disenfranchise voters. Ensuring all Americans have equal access to their constitutionally enshrined right to vote is a top priority

To protect voters from these undemocratic state laws and voter restrictions, Congress needs to pass legislation, including; making Election Day a public holiday, enacting an automatic voter registration system, offering more early voting and mail-in voting options, same day voter registration, restoring the right to vote for returning citizens, targeted protections for voters with disabilities, and more.

Since the 2013 Supreme Court *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, which challenged portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many states have enacted laws that restrict access which disproportionately effect minority and disenfranchised communities.

### QUESTIONS:

**Will you support the Freedom to Vote Act, which includes these critically needed voting protections? Why or why not?**

**Will you support H.R. 4/S. 4, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, improve and modernize the landmark law, and provide the federal government with other critical tools to combat what has become a full-fledged assault on Americans' right to vote? Why or why not?**

## Multi-Employer Pensions

LIUNA is strongly committed to retirement income security for our members and their families. Through our network of multi-employer labor-management pension trust funds, hundreds of thousands of retirees and surviving spouses have received,



or are receiving, a monthly pension benefit for the remainder of their lives. Laborers forgo wage increases in exchange for collectively bargained employer contributions to their pension funds. Billions in retirement benefits have been paid over the past fifty years by LIUNA's pension funds.

Last year, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, Congress provided critically need pension relief that both helps troubled plans pay future promised benefits, and protected healthy plans from cuts.

## QUESTIONS:

**How will you ensure that LIUNA's multi-employer pension funds are protected from any future attacks?**

## Health Care Reform

### Reinsurance

The Budget Reconciliation/Build Back Better (BBB) legislation includes a provision to allow states to establish a state reinsurance program. The legislation, however, does not bar states from passing along the cost of the program to non-profit labor-management funds like the ones that LIUNA has provided for over 50 years to our members. LIUNA already paid over \$70 million as part of the so-called "belly button tax" to fund the ACA; we do not want to be hit with another huge bill in the form of federally funded programs for state reinsurance.

### COVID

In the past two years, a number of laws have been passed to address the COVID crisis, including the CARES Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. LIUNA supports measures to protect our members and their families, and all affected by this pandemic. However, we need to protect our non-profit joint labor-management health and welfare plans from any cost-shifting that would unduly burden our plans' ability to provide the best possible health care for our members and retirees.

### Medicare for All/Universal Health Care

A national, single payer safety net program is an admirable goal, and worthy of debate. However, LIUNA calls on candidates to proceed with caution in light of our union's strong multiemployer health and welfare plans that our members and their families benefit from. Employer and union provided health insurance should be encouraged, and employers who do not

provide insurance for their workers, should contribute toward the safety net insurance programs. LIUNA supports lowering the age of Medicare participation as one way to provide more coverage to un-insured or under-insured Americans.

## QUESTIONS:

**Will you support reform of Section 30602 of the Build Back Better bill to ensure that funds in this section cannot be used to pass along the cost of any state reinsurance program to non-profit labor-management health care plans?**

**Will you fight to ensure that non-profit labor-management health and welfare plans are not unduly burdened with COVID cost mandates, such as mandatory reimbursement of COVID at-home tests?**

**Do you support a plan for universal health care that includes current employer and union-provided health coverage? Why or why not?**

**Do you support lowering the Medicare eligibility age? Why or why not? If so, to what age?**

# Comprehensive Immigration Reform

LIUNA was founded more than a century ago by proud immigrants, and we continue to work for fair treatment of immigrant workers in this nation. LIUNA will continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform and will not stop until it gets done. While we work toward this goal, LIUNA also supports immediate, concrete immigration policies.

## Dreamers/Temporary Protected Status

LIUNA strongly supports the American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6, which would allow immigrants who have lived in the United States since childhood, known as Dreamers, as well as individuals covered by the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program, to remain here. Ending TPS would have a significantly negative effect on the construction industry since over twenty percent of TPS recipients work in our industry. The construction industry needs to retain workers covered by the DACA and TPS programs to continue to build America. These workers build America every day, and, at the same time, build the U.S. economy. The U.S. House passed H.R. 6 last year and a path to permanency was included in the House-passed Build Back Better Act last year as well. The U.S. Senate has yet to act on relief for Dreamers and TPS holders.

## Guest Worker Visa Programs

Guest worker visa programs allow employers to hire guest workers to fill temporary “seasonal” jobs. Construction and landscaping work, often performed by LIUNA members, are two of the top industries for H-2B visas. Many contractors that use H-2B visas falsely contend that they are unable to fill vacancies because workers already in the U.S. are unwilling to do those jobs. This is simply not true. Employers often turn to the program to avoid paying U.S. workers fair wages, and instead turn to guest workers who they can exploit. Many employers using H-2B visas have violated the law multiple times and yet continue to get these visas. Additionally, the H-2A agricultural visa program is being misused to hire construction and landscape workers from other nations to come to the U.S. even though that program is not supposed to be used for construction workers.

### QUESTIONS:

**Do you support comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants?**

**Do you support legislation to protect Dreamers and TPS holders?**

**Do you support restricting the H-2B and H-2A guest worker visa programs? Would you take steps to crack down on fraud and abuse of this program, especially in the construction and landscape industries?**

## **Supporting Public Employees**

In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that public employee unions must in some cases represent free riders who refuse to pay fair share fees for the benefits of their union contract. In response to this bad decision, the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act will allow every public sector employee to join a union and bargain collectively.

### **QUESTIONS:**

**Do you support or oppose the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act? Why or why not?**

## **Supporting Federal Workers**

Over the past decade, federal employees have contributed over \$180 billion to deficit reduction in the form of pay freezes, retirement security cuts, and sequestration and government shutdowns. Hiring freezes have harmed morale and stretched federal workers in the past several years. Executive orders issued by the Trump Administration that restricted federal workers' ability to collectively bargain, use official time to perform needed representational activities, and ensure due process for workers were thankfully overturned by President Biden last year. These attacks have harmed morale, hurt recruitment and retention of qualified, expert workers serving our nation, including through the COVID crisis

## QUESTIONS:

**How will you protect federal employees and prevent further attacks on these workers and their union rights?**

## Reforming U.S. Postal Service Finances

For almost a decade, the United States Postal Service has been beleaguered by a financial crisis. The loss of revenue resulting from declining mail volume has been compounded by a provision in the 2006 postal reform legislation which required the Postal Service to pre-fund its future retiree health benefits at a cost of \$5.6 billion annually. This pre-funding requirement has resulted in mounting losses, rising debt and destructive job and service cuts, even though the Postal Service has had an operating surplus in recent years. The pre-funding provision is unprecedented. No other agency or private enterprise is required to pre-fund its retiree health benefits.

Additionally, postal customers have seen USPS imposed reductions in delivery standards since 2012 as a means to save money. This has resulted in delays in personal, business, and government correspondence, parcels, and medication. This has done nothing but erode the public's trust in the Postal Service, and the desired financial savings has been minimal.

## QUESTIONS:

**In the 117th Congress, elected officials introduced legislation that would repeal the prefunding mandate; provide comprehensive postal reform to stabilize the agency's finances; and support the restoration of service standards last seen in 2012. Would you support similar legislative measures?**

SUBMITTED BY

**Candidate Name**

**Preparer Name**  
(if applicable)

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