

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Jacob Hay, 202-942-2282, 202-445-4788 or [jhay@liuna.org](mailto:jhay@liuna.org)

## **As Fallen Workers are Mourned on Workers' Memorial Day, LIUNA Calls for Commitment to Keeping Workers Safe**

**Washington, DC (April 28, 2009)** – As fallen workers are mourned today on Workers' Memorial Day, LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – called for a renewed commitment to workplace safety standards to protect against future injuries and deaths.

“The price of going to work every day to build America should not be injury or death on the job,” said LIUNA General President, Terry O’Sullivan. “Today, we honor the workers who have been killed on the job and call for an increase in resources to prevent injuries and deaths.”

According to the U.S. Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2007 – the most recent year for which statistics are available – more than four million workers were injured on the job and 5,657 workers were killed due to job-site hazards. Of those injured, about 400,000 were construction workers, and of those killed, about 1,200 were construction workers. While construction workers represent about 7 percent of the workforce, they represent more than 21 percent of job-related deaths.

When workers and contractors get the kind of training and regulation they need, injuries and deaths can be prevented. LIUNA’s health and safety programs and nationwide training centers aim to prevent accidents and reach our goal of zero workers killed or injured while building America.

A key part of the problem is drastic underfunding of OSHA’s enforcement programs. OSHA’s 2008 budget of \$486 million comes to \$3.89 per covered worker. In the U.S., there is only one OSHA inspector for every 63,913 covered workers. With such limited resources, OSHA inspectors can only inspect each workplace once every 137 years on the federal level and once every 65 years on the state level.

President Barack Obama’s 2010 fiscal year budget proposal calls for increased OSHA funding.

In addition, LIUNA and safety activists are calling for the passage of the Projecting America’s Workers Act, which would expand OSHA coverage to public sector workers, increase penalties for companies that willfully and repeatedly violate safety regulations and protect workers who blow the whistle on safety hazards.

“For too long the health and safety concerns of workers have been dismissed as leaders in Washington developed a culture that prioritized corporate interests over workers and profit over safety,” said O’Sullivan. “We are encouraged by President Obama’s prioritizing the needs of working people, and we look forward to working with his Administration to make worksites safe for LIUNA members and all workers.”

###

*The 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.*