

## NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

### *United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America*

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To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Governor's request to fund an additional six Wage and Hour Enforcement Officers for the Department of Labor. Tonight, you will hear many facts and figures, both for and against, this request. There are many people that are here to voice their opinions, many much smarter than me, and I respect their knowledge, but I would like to present an example of what life is like for the people that these new Wage and Hour Enforcers would be protecting.

Recently there have been stop work orders issued at certain jobs. The majority of these jobs were construction sites. Unfortunately, construction is a season and weather sensitive profession. That being said, no one working on the construction job site is making a blockbuster salary. In fact, most depend on their paycheck week to week and will only make enough to survive, which is why having the Wage and Hour Enforcers so important.

Construction is becoming a magnet for predatory employers. Due to the fact that most workers are so willing to work in order to survive, certain employers have made some less than desirable working conditions for them to earn their living. Men and women have worked in all weather, long hours, and all for minimal pay. Some workers have been forced to pay their own taxes, some to accept sub-standard wages, some had even had to give money back to their employers on certain jobs, but these men and women should have been paid well, like with prevailing wage jobs. You may ask yourself, why would someone agree to this? Or, why would they give up something that they have worked so hard for? The number one answer is because their family needed them to. I have been in contact with many people in the construction field, both Union and Non-Union, various races and genders and one thing that rings true with everyone is that most construction workers live in "survival mode". They take what they are given and make it stretch until it bounces. Having to work long hours for a measly paycheck is better than no paycheck, or having peanut butter and jelly is better than no food for the family. When you see one name on a wage claim, please realize that, in most cases, there are other family members affected. Some families may consist of 2 or 3 people, in my case, if I didn't get paid, 5 people wouldn't be taken care of. These working people need a voice to protect what they are working so hard to achieve.

With the addition of these six employees they would be the strong clear voice they are looking for. The current staff is efficient in the work they do, but the area is much too large for them to cover. There are workers being exploited in wealthy cities such as Greenwich and Stamford, in working cities like Norwalk and Hartford, and in small rural communities like Putnam. The story is the same, these workers need a voice. I personally support the addition of six employees, for the sum of \$300,000, and I believe that it will have a positive, profound effect on the working class people of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

David S. Jarvis