



**INTERNATIONAL
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February 12, 2018

VIA EMAIL

To: All Members of the United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 775,000 active and retired members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I am writing to express opposition to H.R. 3808, the “Infrastructure Expansion Act of 2017,” considered by the House Judiciary Committee on January 30, 2018. It seeks to remove liability for construction gravity or elevation related accidents on federally-funded projects, depriving workers in one of the most dangerous industries of legal remedy.

The legislation would “preclude absolute liability in any action against a property owner or contractor for projects receiving Federal financial assistance for infrastructure and transportation development.” While this definition would include practically every infrastructure project in the United States, as most contain at least some federal funding, it would override laws like New York’s “scaffold law,” which applies liability to construction companies and contractors in the event of a gravity-related accident. In New York alone, this legislation would adversely affect job site safety for over 141,000 IBEW members.

One in five worker deaths in 2016 were in construction, and the leading cause of private sector worker deaths in the construction industry were falls. While the IBEW embraces the renewed focus on the critical need for rebuilding America’s infrastructure, H.R. 3808 makes it more likely that the human cost of workplace injuries will be borne by the victims and their families. When liability shifts away from owners and contractors, safety becomes less of a priority, increasing on-the-job injuries and deaths.

H.R. 3808 is an attempt to nullify state laws allowing workers and their families to obtain reasonable compensation for serious workplace injuries. The “Infrastructure Expansion Act of 2017” would make construction worker safety a casualty of profits and states’ rights a victim of federal influence. The IBEW stands in strong opposition to H.R. 3808 and urges you to vote “no.”

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

LRS:lgd

