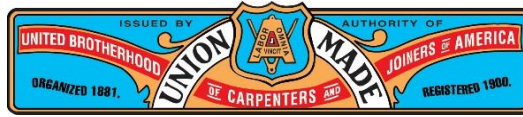


NORTH ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

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JOSEPH BYRNE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY - TREASURER

April 16, 2024

Chairperson Stevens & Members
Committee on General and Housing
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Chair Stevens and Members of the committee,

On behalf of the more than 30,000 members of the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, ***I am writing to request your support for the passage of PR. 3: A Constitutional Amendment to Guarantee Vermont Workers Right to Collectively Bargain.*** Since the founding of our nation, the people of Vermont have led efforts to establish and preserve our nations fundamental freedoms, advance equality and protect the rights of all working people. We encourage you to continue this tradition of leadership by becoming the second state in the nation to pass this important legislation that would enshrine worker's rights into the state's Constitution.

While all the workers in Vermont currently have the right to organize, these rights are under attack in the Washington and in state capitals across the nation by well-funded corporate special interests. In addition, for the last decade the Supreme Court has been increasingly hostile to organized workers by: established "right-to-work" for all public sector employees (*Janus v. AFSCME, 2018*); undermined the right to organize by restricting right to access employees on their worksites (*Cedar Point v. Hassid, 2021*); and are poised to potentially undermine unions right to strike (*Glacier Northwest v. Int'l Bhd. Of Teamsters, 2023*). In neighboring New Hampshire, well-funded corporate special interest groups have pushed so called "Right to Work" laws that if passed would significantly lower wages, make jobsites less safe and poverty rates higher. We are happy to report that they have been stopped again for this year.

While public support for unions is at a sixty year high, union membership has declined dramatically over the last forty years in Vermont and around the country because of these relentless attacks. We see the impacts of this decline in Vermont, especially in the construction sector, that has seen a degradation of wages and working condition as unionization rates have fallen According to a recent study by the Century Foundation, Vermont has the highest rates of construction worker misclassification in the nation. This means that thousands of workers are not paid fair wages, do not have access to employer health and pension benefits, as well as not being part of the state's workers compensation system. This hurts all of Vermont's citizens because it drives down wages, increases poverty and over burdens the

states safety net programs. Stronger unions are the key to addressing this problem and now is a critically important time to protect the rights to organize and help unions grow in Vermont.

We believe that the time is now to codify the labor rights of Vermont workers by passing *PR. 3: A Constitutional Amendment to Guarantee Vermont Workers Right to Collectively Bargain* and protect Vermont workers from any erosion of rights that may come with national political change. We also encourage you to continue to work to pass legislation that makes it easier for workers to organize and join unions. Thank you for your public service and for your consideration of our unions request to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Joseph Byrne
Executive Secretary Treasurer