

March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Wiklund and Chair Liebling,

On behalf of the 29,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing in strong support of SF 2269/HF 2505, which will provide badly needed funds to help victims of human trafficking and exploitation.

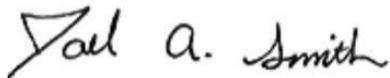
Labor trafficking wage theft and worker exploitation pose a growing threat to the welfare of immigrant workers and the health of the state's construction industry. Minnesota's construction boom is creating thousands of good family-sustaining jobs and careers, but it has also attracted shady contractors who aim to profit off the backs of immigrant and trafficked workers and the problem can be found in every corner of the state.

For example, in 2019, LIUNA joined a collective of 14 unions representing Minnesota's unionized construction workforce to launch the Not On My Watch campaign. The campaign was instrumental in organizing directly with exploited immigrant workers building the Digi-Key Expansion Project in Thief River Falls. The campaign helped victims file complaints with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) alleging labor violations, wage theft, failure to provide workers' compensation to injured workers, and whistleblower retaliation against Millennium workers on the project. The DLI investigation resulted in the payment of nearly \$315,000 in back wages to construction workers on the project.

Human trafficking and exploitation of our immigrant neighbors are a scourge, and Minnesotans should not look the other way. We applaud the efforts directed at holding both traffickers and wage thieves accountable for their crimes. Ensuring adequate support and help for victims is also a necessary piece of the puzzle. Not only do victims deserve a helping hand, but these supports could allow victims to come forward without fear that their access to shelter or food will be cut off by perpetrators.

In closing, I encourage your support for SF 2269/HF 2505 and appreciate your attention to this important issue.

In Solidarity,



Joel Smith  
President and Business Manager