

Leo W. Gerard  
International President

April 24, 2018

**VIA E-MAIL**

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

This Saturday, April 28, is Workers Memorial Day. Each year we remember the workers who were killed on the job over the last year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 5,000 workers were killed at work in the United States in 2016. Our union mourns the 34 lives lost in occupational deaths in United Steelworkers (USW) represented workplaces during this period. USW members have seen the devastation that occurs in a workplace and community after a fatality. Sadly, these numbers do not account for the tens of thousands of people who die each year from occupational illness.

It is in memory of these workers that I write, on behalf of the USW membership, in **strong support of S. 2621, the Protecting America's Workers Act**. This important legislation, which has been introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin, will modernize the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act to further prevent injury and illness caused by hazards at work.

The OSH Act of 1970 created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration as a part of the U.S. Department of Labor. OSHA sets standards, provides training, and provides assistance to ensure that employers provide an environment free of recognized hazards that will cause injury to working men and women.

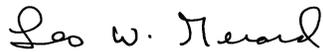
USW members know first-hand the hazards and needed protections in a wide variety of workplaces. Although the OSH Act has saved hundreds of thousands of lives over nearly 50 years, no significant updates have been made to the law since its original passage. Changes to the economy and the workforce necessitate modernization of the law.

The Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA) would help keep workers safe and would promote justice for injured, sickened, or deceased workers by:

- Authorizing federal prosecutions against employers who knowingly commit OSHA violations that result in death or serious bodily injury;
- Adjusting and modernizing the fines for civil penalties;
- Mandating that employers fix a hazard after they receive a citation even if they contest the citations;
- Requiring that OSHA investigate all cases of death and serious injuries;
- Improving whistleblower protections by increasing the time that workers have to file a complaint from 30 days to 180 days and expanding those eligible for protection;
- Establishing rights for families who were killed on the job; and
- Expanding OSHA coverage to include federal employees and, in 25 states, state and local government employees.

This year, in honor of those who have died at work, the **USW urges you to cosponsor the Protecting America's Workers Act (S. 2621)**. Our economy and workplaces have changed dramatically since 1970. Congress cannot wait any longer to modernize protections for workers' health and safety.

Sincerely,



Leo W. Gerard  
International President

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