



HR0609

LRB102 23459 ECR 32633 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Working conditions for construction and
3 stationary workers in the late 1800s were appalling; their
4 wages for 60-to-90-hour work weeks were equally miserable, and
5 benefits were practically non-existent; and

6 WHEREAS, In an effort to change those conditions, eleven
7 pioneering individuals met in Chicago on December 7, 1896 to
8 form the National Union of Steam Engineers of America; and

9 WHEREAS, A year later, the first Canadian workers joined
10 the fledgling union; to reflect this expansion across the
11 border, the union's name was changed to the International
12 Union of Steam Engineers; and

13 WHEREAS, Members of the union flocked to San Francisco to
14 rebuild that majestic city after it was turned to rubble in the
15 earthquake of 1906; thousands of operating engineers also
16 moved mountains in the next few years while digging the Panama
17 Canal; and

18 WHEREAS, As steam-driven construction became widespread
19 across the U.S., more and more construction workers joined,
20 and the union changed its name at its 1912 convention to
21 reflect this new composition in the first decade of the new

1 century, becoming the International Union of Steam and
2 Operating Engineers; and

3 WHEREAS, As members began working with internal combustion
4 engines, electric motors, hydraulic machinery, and
5 refrigerating systems as well as steam boilers and engines,
6 the word "steam" was dropped from the union's name, and in
7 1928, it became the International Union of Operating Engineers
8 (IUOE); and

9 WHEREAS, As the organization progressed, it attracted
10 workers from the public sector, making it a truly diverse
11 trade union; and

12 WHEREAS, Passage of the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931, which
13 guaranteed construction workers' wage rates on federally
14 financed projects, helped the union weather the after-effects
15 of the Great Depression and maintain its progress; and

16 WHEREAS, IUOE would later see thousands of its members
17 contribute to America's war efforts as members of the U.S.
18 Navy's Seabees; the Seabees were skilled construction men who
19 built bases, airfields, and roads in war zones, including the
20 beaches of Europe, the DMZ of Korea, and the jungles of
21 Vietnam; and

1 WHEREAS, IUOE's growth and progress was fueled greatly at
2 the end of World War II when the Federal Highway Trust Program
3 came into existence, creating thousands of jobs for operating
4 engineers; and

5 WHEREAS, In the following decades, the union persevered
6 through boom times and lean times and is still going strong
7 today; and

8 WHEREAS, Projects that are critical to Illinois'
9 commercial, education, transportation, health, energy, and
10 logistics systems are built by and are monuments to the skills
11 of the members of the IUOE; and

12 WHEREAS, IUOE is building a better tomorrow for its
13 members and all American and Canadian citizens, and Illinois
14 plays an important role in the leadership of the organization;
15 James M. Sweeney, local 150 President-Business Manager, is the
16 General Secretary Treasurer of the IUOE, serving in the second
17 highest office in the International Union; in addition,
18 operating engineers have been vocal supporters of
19 infrastructure modernization and currently work statewide on
20 projects funded by the Rebuild Illinois capital plan;
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE

1 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we congratulate the International Union of Operating
3 Engineers, Local 150 on its 125-year anniversary; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to IUOE, Local 150 as a symbol of our esteem and
7 respect.