

PROTECT PREVAILING WAGE



A TOOLKIT FOR MICHIGAN'S WORKING FAMILIES

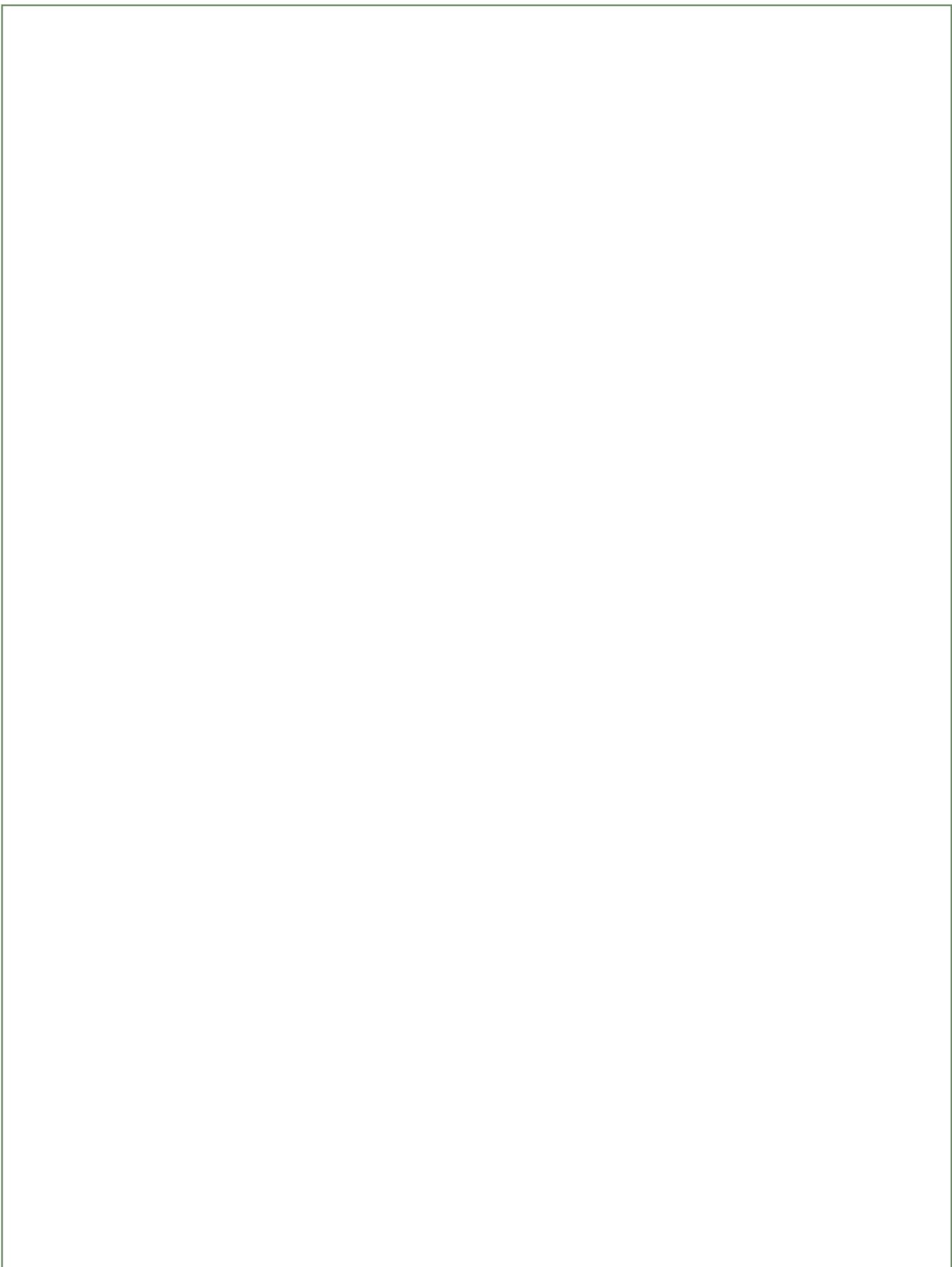


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PREVAILING WAGE FACT SHEET

PREVAILING WAGES PROTECT PAYCHECKS, TAXPAYERS

The state prevailing wage law sets a local prevailing wage rate on state construction projects based on a survey of actual wages, benefits, and training contributions paid in that community. Construction workers earn fair wages and benefits for their work on public construction and taxpayers can depend on higher quality construction.

Prevailing wage rates protect paychecks and allows working people to get ahead and prosper.

- The low quality contractor groups who are pushing to repeal or weaken prevailing wage laws are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.
- Prevailing wage rates support good jobs with career paths for workers in the construction industry because they take into account health, pension and training benefits—investments not made by low-wage contractors.
- Prevailing wage rates aren't a "union wage." They are local wages that help all construction workers earn a fair day's pay and benefits for a fair day's work.

Prevailing wages are good for the community.

- Prevailing wages strengthen the overall economy by supporting good local jobs and spending at local businesses, such as grocery stores, malls and gas stations.
- Prevailing wages prevent government spending from driving down local wages and living standards.
- Prevailing wages maintain standards for workers from all backgrounds and enable minorities to benefit from training and apprenticeship programs that open doors to opportunity in the construction industry.

Prevailing wage rates protect taxpayer dollars by keeping worksites safe and productive.

- Repealing prevailing wage would lower the quality of projects, and jeopardize worker safety on the job, leading to costly delays, accidents, and mistakes.
- Construction work is dangerous and it's even more dangerous without a strong prevailing wage law. An analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data on worker fatalities in construction bears out that states with weak or non-existent prevailing wage laws have a much higher incidence of fatal workplace incidents.¹
- Lowering wages reduces on the job productivity. For example, a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.²

1. A Weakened State: The Economic and Social Impacts of Repeal of the Prevailing Wage Law in Illinois. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. https://ler.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PWL_policy-brief_spreads041.pdf
Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf

KEY MESSAGES FOR LEADERS: MEMBER MEETINGS, TESTIMONY, NEWS MEDIA

Prevailing wages protect paychecks for all construction workers.

- Prevailing wage rates aren't necessarily a "union wage." They are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers. Without it, construction workers earn less and more families will need some form of public assistance to supplement their income.
- Low road contractors who are working to repeal or weaken the state prevailing wage law are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.
- Without a prevailing wage rate, skilled trades workers could see their wage and compensation package plummet 20% to 50%.

Bottom of the barrel contractors are pushing repeal so that they can cut workers' pay and pocket the profit.

- Responsible contractors understand that they are making an investment that helps their business succeed by fairly compensating a skilled and trained workforce.
- It's the irresponsible contractors who are eager to cut workers' wages who are pushing repeal.
- And, don't be fooled when low quality contractors pay less in wages, they do not pass savings on to taxpayers—they pocket the profits.¹

Prevailing wage rates protect taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built to the highest standards.

- Prevailing wage rates often include investment in training and apprenticeship programs which not only provide a career path for workers but also ensure that projects are built to the highest standards of quality.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads and bridges, there are more likely to be mistakes, workplace accidents, change orders, and cost overruns.
- Lowering wages actually reduces on the job productivity. For example, in a study of highway and bridge work in 10 states found that when high wage workers were paid double that of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for \$557 million less.²

1. Manzo, Lantsberg, Duncan, The Economic, Fiscal, and Social Impacts of State Prevailing Wage Laws: Choosing Between the High Road and the Low Road in the Construction Industry, February 9, 2016

2. Wages, Productivity and Highway Construction Costs, CLRC, March 2004. http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/wages_productivity_highway.pdf

BUSINESS MANAGER LETTER TO MEMBERS

[Date]

RE: 20%-50% CUT FOR YOUR NEXT PAYCHECK??

Dear Local [local number] Member:

I am writing to let you know that state lawmakers are working on a bill that would cut your pay by 20%-50%. The proposed repeal of prevailing wage on public construction would slash wages and benefits on projects that you work on.

We have to fight back to protect the livelihoods of working families.

I need you to come to the next union meeting to learn more about this. We are working with allied groups and other unions to stop this attack but YOU need to be in this fight.

This is about your paycheck and your benefits. In the coming weeks, we will be asking you to participate in events and other efforts to pressure lawmakers to re-think this terrible legislation.

Please stay tuned and call the Hall with any questions. Fraternally yours,

[name]

Business Manager

ROBOCALL SCRIPTS

Turnout Script

This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and your paycheck. This is your NAME calling to ask you to join thousands of your brother and sisters at a rally against a 20%-50% cut to your paycheck. Lawmakers are considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages and threaten good union jobs.

If you are committed to attending, press 1 on your phone now. If we are united and heard, we can protect good jobs. Thank you—and again press 1 if you'll attend the rally to fight for good jobs.

Patch-Through Script

This is your union calling with an urgent message about good jobs and paycheck. This is your NAME calling because the state legislature is considering repeal of prevailing wage on public construction work which would drive down your wages 20%-50% and threaten good union jobs.

Please take a moment to call your state representative at 517-373-6339 or press 1 now and deliver the message, vote no on a 20%-50% pay cut for construction workers. Once again press 1 on your phone to deliver the message to your representative to vote no on a pay cut for construction workers.

Thank you and goodbye.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Example Graphics:



For files to post on your social media profiles, visit: <http://bit.ly/miprevailingwage>

Example Tweets:

Fill in the blanks and add your own image to personalize tweets

- Call 855-721-3304 and tell your state senator to protect #prevailingwage laws for Michigan
- Call 866-834-6910 and tell your state rep to protect #prevailingwage laws for Michigan
- #Attacks on #prevailingwage will hurt Michigan's working families
- #Prevailingwage laws help #veterans. Attacking #prevailingwages could cost hundreds of veterans their #jobs

Twitter Hashtags to Use:

#1u	#protectprevailingwage	#PrevailingWage
#jobs	#veterans	#mileg

TELL MICHIGAN LAWMAKERS: DON'T CUT MY PAY

We need to build Michigan's infrastructure

the right way: with skilled workers who earn good wages and have the opportunity to build a middle class life. State lawmakers are considering a bill that would slash the wages and benefits of the hard-working, blue-collar men and women, by repealing the state prevailing wage law.



Michigan's Prevailing Wage Law Ensures that:

- Contractors bidding on public construction projects pay family-supporting wages that don't undermine local standards.
- Public projects are built by skilled, safe and well-trained construction craftspeople.
- Costly mistakes, accidents, and overruns are avoided because projects are built by responsible contractors who employ a skilled workforce.



**CALL THE LEGISLATURE TODAY:
SENATE: 855-721-3304
HOUSE: 866-834-6910
TELL LAWMAKERS: DON'T CUT MY PAY!**



michiganbuildingtrades.org



KEY MESSAGES FOR MEMBERS: TESTIMONY, MEETINGS, OR HEARINGS

Repealing prevailing wage would cut my paycheck and my benefits by 20% or more.

- I can't afford a pay cut or to lose the benefits that provide health coverage for me and my family.
- And, as a skilled construction worker who lives here in this state, my wages shouldn't be put on the chopping block by bottom of the barrel contractors.
- As a construction worker, I see first-hand how prevailing wage keeps my wages from being cut by setting a local wage rate in the construction industry.
- Repealing prevailing wages would let government spending create a race to the bottom. It's naïve to believe that contractors who want to pay lower wages and hire unskilled workers are giving taxpayers a better deal. They will be cutting corners and pocketing the savings as profits.

Prevailing wages are good for my community.

- The prevailing wage law protects local jobs and local contractors by stopping irresponsible contractors from coming into my community with low paid and unskilled labor.
- Prevailing wage rates protect paychecks for all construction workers. The rates aren't a "union wage." They are set by a survey of actual wages and benefits paid to union and nonunion workers.
- Without prevailing wage protection, workers like me can't pay the bills, we can't spend money at the grocery store, the gas pump, in local stores or afford to rent or buy a home.
- That means fewer dollars in our local economy and a smaller budget for public schools and services.

Prevailing wages protect me as a taxpayer by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled workforce.

- Without a prevailing wage rate, contractors will lower pay and benefits and stop investing in worker training in order to win bids.
- Prevailing wage supports employment for skilled local tradespeople and the use of responsible contractors.
- When irresponsible contractors, paying the least in wages and benefits, build our roads, bridges and government buildings, there are more likely to be accidents, mistakes, and cost overruns.

**Use personal stories, such as "Without a prevailing wage rate, I will have to make tough financial choices like whether I can afford to pay for my children to participate in sports or whether we can take the family trip we planned."*

KEY MESSAGES FOR CONTRACTORS: TESTIMONY OR HEARINGS

Prevailing wage is good for my business.

- I am a responsible business owner and I want to attract and retain the best workers by offering good benefits and wages.
- Prevailing wage laws help my business compete on the quality of our work.
- A prevailing wage repeal will undermine me in the marketplace by hurting my ability to compete on the quality, safety and productivity advantage I have because I use union workers.

Prevailing wages help the economy and my community.

- I am proud to support my community by hiring local workers.
- By offering a prevailing rate of pay and benefits, I am making an investment in my business and in my community.
- Without prevailing wages workers earn less and that takes away from our local tax base. That means there would be less for public schools and services that help attract businesses and make a community safe and secure.

The low bid, low quality contractor groups pushing repeal don't represent me.

- As a business owner, I understand that a trained and skilled workforce requires adequate compensation and benefits and I am happy to make that investment.
- You get what you pay for. When contractors come in with bargain basement wages, you know they aren't attracting skilled workers with the experience and training to build schools, hospitals and public buildings to the highest standards.
- Taxpayers lose in the end if low bid, low quality contractors win bids because they won't be able to build public projects without costly mistakes, workplace accidents, and time and cost overruns.

SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM MEMBERS

Dear Editor,

Our state legislature is considering repealing our prevailing wage law. This is the last thing we need in our state. Prevailing wage isn't a "union wage." It's a wage rate that helps all construction workers and protects taxpayers.

For me, it would mean a 20% or more pay cut. And, to that, I say: No, thanks.

Prevailing wage sets a wage rate on public construction projects to keep low quality contractors from lowering wages and benefits to win bids.

When contractors lower pay to win bids, they often use unskilled workers which means not only are more experienced workers out of a job, but taxpayers have poorly constructed schools and public buildings and delays, accidents, and cost overruns are more frequent.

We should reject this attack on paychecks in the construction industry.

Sincerely,

[name and local union]

Dear Editor,

I am writing to speak out against prevailing wage repeal. Our community and our country is about more than low-wage jobs.

Our country is about the opportunity to get ahead and prosper. The bill put forth by lawmakers is a special interest effort to cut workers' pay and benefits.

Without prevailing wage laws, pay and benefits for all construction work is driven down as contractors compete for work based on who pays the lowest possible wage and provides the least possible benefits.

Our legislators should be honest about this law—it's really an attack on workers in the construction industry and our opportunity to prosper.

Sincerely,

[name and local union]

Dear Editor,

Out of state contractors are pushing lawmakers to repeal our state's prevailing wage law so they can use unskilled out of state workers and avoid paying good wages and benefits.

Let's be honest, when contractors pay less for labor they aren't giving taxpayers a discount. Taxpayers are getting a bill in the form of poorly constructed buildings that take longer to build and cost more in the long run.

This is an attack on construction workers and it's an attack on our community. Legislators should reject a repeal of the prevailing wage.

Sincerely,

[name and local union]

BUSINESS MANAGER LETTER TO STATE LEGISLATORS/GOVERNOR

[Date]

Dear State Official,

I am writing to urge you to protect good local jobs by opposing a prevailing wage repeal. Low quality contractors who are working to repeal or weaken prevailing wage laws are really out to cut workers' paychecks and pocket the pay-cuts as profits.

This would either kill local jobs or drive down wages as much as 20% for the men and women I represent. Without prevailing wage laws, pay and benefits for all construction work is driven down as contractors compete for work based on who pays the lowest possible wage and provides the least possible benefits.

Prevailing wage law protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled local workforce. It is dangerous to let cut-rate, low-bid contractors build our schools, hospitals, and bridges with the cheapest labor. We want local companies employing skilled tradespeople who will be responsible for their work and use quality materials.

As the business manager of Local Union X, I know first-hand how prevailing wage keeps public investment from driving down wages and helps constituents of your district get ahead by starting careers in construction.

Our community and our country is about more than low-wage jobs. I hope you will stand in solidarity with working people across Michigan and stop the repeal of prevailing wage in our state.

Sincerely,

Local Union X Business Manager

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS RALLY TO PROTECT QUALITY PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION, STOP PAY CUT

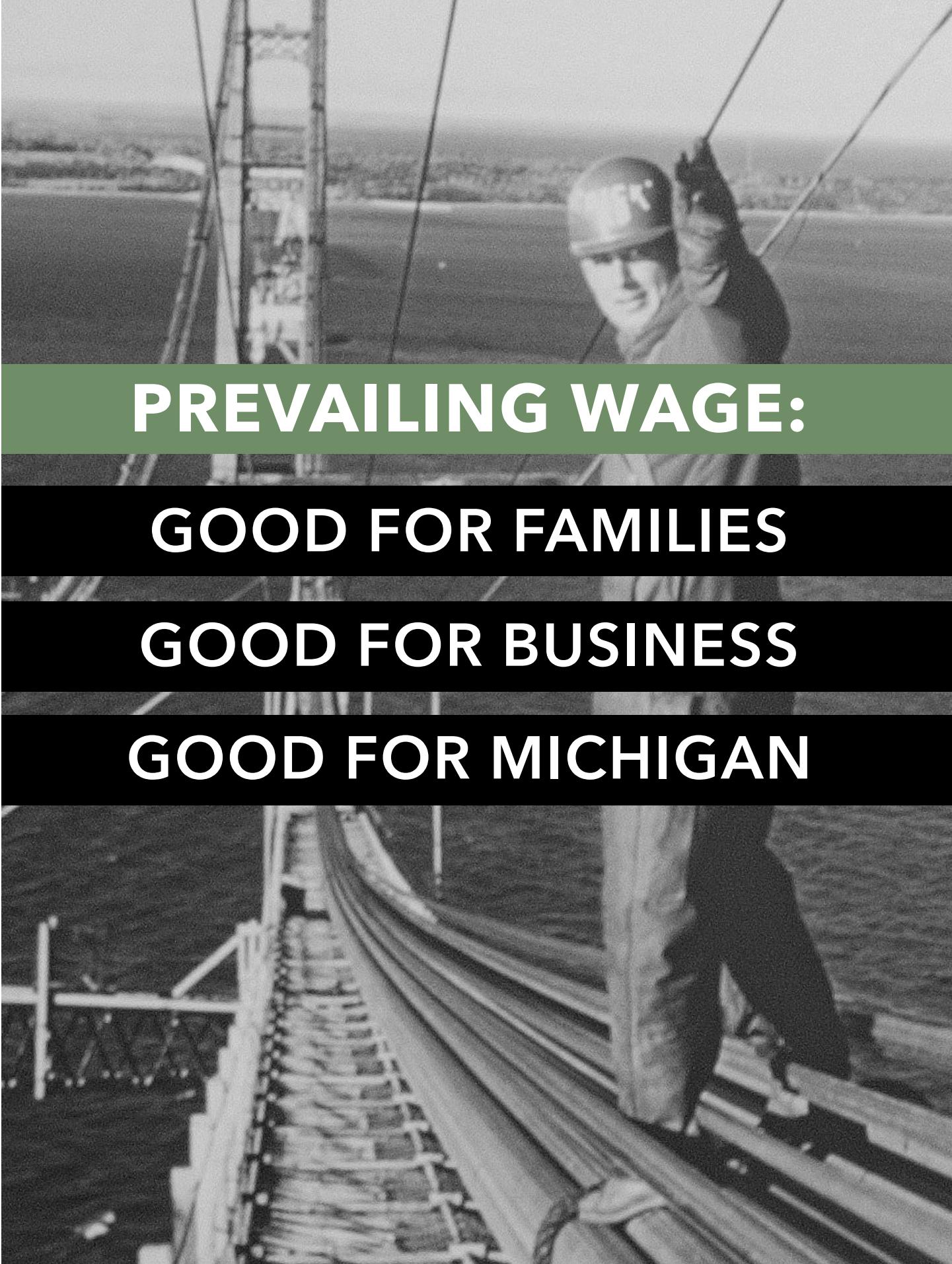
CITY – As lawmakers in the State House consider a repeal of prevailing wage which would cut the pay as much as 20% for tens of thousands of construction workers, workers are gathering for a rally against the bill. Low quality contractors and special interest groups pushing this legislation aim to turn good jobs into low-wage jobs with no benefits.

Prevailing wage law protects taxpayer investments by ensuring that public projects are built by contractors who invest in a skilled local workforce. It is dangerous to let cut-rate, low-bid contractors build our schools, hospitals, and bridges with the cheapest labor. We want local companies employing skilled tradespeople who will be responsible for their work and use quality materials.

"Lawmakers pushing a prevailing wage cut are being extremely short-sighted. Cutting the pay of construction workers will increase taxpayer costs, cut wages and threaten the quality of public construction," said **UNION REPRESENTATIVE NAME, TITLE**.

The rally is part of a larger coordinated effort that involves tens of thousands of worker phone calls and emails to lawmakers to stop the attack on prevailing wage.

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PREVAILING WAGE:

GOOD FOR FAMILIES

GOOD FOR BUSINESS

GOOD FOR MICHIGAN