



BROTHERHOOD OF MAINTENANCE OF WAY EMPLOYES DIVISION
of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

BURLINGTON SYSTEM DIVISION

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December 2, 2022

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senator for Iowa
730 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Invitation to Engage with Rail Workers in a Virtual Town Hall Event

Dear Senator Ernst:

We write to you on behalf of the rail workers we represent as members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (BMWED) of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Our members, who live and work in your state, form the Burlington System Division of our Brotherhood. Our System Division represents rail workers on seven railroads, working across thirteen states. We are proud of our members working in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming; men and women who keep the tracks and bridges safe for BNSF Railway, CP Railway, the South Shore Line of NICTD, Iowa Interstate Railroad, the Lake Superior & Ishpeming Railroad, and Illinois Railway.

Our members proudly build and maintain the tracks, right of way, buildings, bridges, and other critical infrastructure for these railroads and support the safe movement of freight through our hometowns and your great State. We work in all weather conditions, at all hours of the day, seven days a week. Our work is vital to maintaining the supply chains that keep this great nation of ours moving, even at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On December 1, 2022, the United States Senate held a series of votes to resolve the bargaining dispute between our Union and those railroads organized within the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC). Despite many attempts by our Union and all of rail labor to come to a voluntary agreement with these railroads, their refusal to join us at the bargaining table in good faith led to this dispute becoming the business of Congress and the American people. Under your authority to avert a rail strike, you voted as a body to impose the provisions of tentative agreements previously rejected by our members.

Also on December 1, you had the ability to support rail workers and demonstrate your commitment to the working-class people who keep our great Country moving. A critical issue within our dispute,

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and one which the Presidential Emergency Board convened earlier this year failed to adequately address, was the improvement of our members' quality of life by the provision of paid sick leave. This paid sick leave is a benefit that many American workers, including most of the management personnel on those railroads where we work, already enjoy. It is an essential benefit to keeping workers and workplaces safe. Our Brotherhood, like many others, view paid sick leave not as a luxury, but as a necessity for the work we do and the conditions in which we do that work.

Your colleagues in the US House of Representatives recognized the truth of our position and the value that paid sick leave provides not only to us workers, but also to our workplaces, our families, and our communities. Through the passage of H. Con. Res. 119 as a concurrent resolution to H.J. Res. 100, Congress could both protect the American economy and provide essential support to the American rail workers who continued sacrifices keep our economy thriving.

However, you chose to vote against H. Con. Res. 119 and "kick the can" on an essential workplace safety measure that you, your staff, and many other workers already enjoy. In this you have chosen to preserve the already record-breaking profits of the railroads whose lack of good-faith bargaining put us in this position in the first place. Further, the railroads' relentless greed and adherence to faulty operating models has already caused supply chain issues throughout the economy and strained our members, their workforce, to the breaking point.

Since you have chosen to involve yourselves as parties to our labor dispute and, in so doing, chosen to side with the railroads, we would like to extend an opportunity to you to explain why you voted NAY to H. Con. Res. 119 for Paid Sick Leave. At a mutually agreeable date and time we can set up a virtual townhall meeting where you can engage directly with our members and explain your vote. You can respond to the questions and concerns of your constituents, our brothers and sisters, and justify your rationale for your vote on H. Con. Res. 119. We will make all the necessary accommodations for you and your staff to schedule this meeting.

We look forward to working with you in this matter, and to your prompt response.

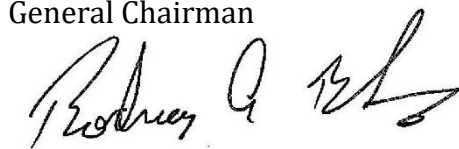
Sincerely,



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General Chairman



Thomas Steinbrenner
Vice General Chairman



Rod Blessing
Vice General Chairman



Gene Thompson
Vice General Chairman



Mark Semande
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