

So We Vote Down the TA ... Then What?

Many rail workers are unhappy with the Tentative Agreement. Most rails want more - a better quality of work life and improved conditions of employment. However, some are fatalistic and may feel that the situation is hopeless, that we should "take the money and run," accept our fate, and hope for better in the future. Rails may feel that if we vote NO, the union officials will simply repackage the TA and apply the pressure to get a YES vote, or Congress will simply shove the TA or the PEB (or even worse) down our throats. While this sentiment is understandable, Railroad Workers United disagrees.

RWU has published a document: *Ten Reasons to Vote NO on the Operating Crafts TA*. But we understand that - while many working railroaders may agree - they may still harbor thoughts outlined above. Here is why you - as a working railroader - should be confident and proud to **Vote NO!**

- This is one of those times when we simply must vote our conscience. If you want to vote NO, then vote NO! If you believe this is a good contract, please vote yes. But if not, gather your pride and your dignity and stand up for what you believe, rather than what the power structure might be coaxing, cajoling, and intimidating you to do, and **Vote NO!**
- As the great union organizer and founder of the American Railway Union said more than one hundred years ago, "I would rather vote for something that I wanted and not get it than vote for something I did not want and get it." **Vote No!**
- Even if we do not vote this contract proposal down, we **MUST AT LEAST** make a solid showing to the carriers, Congress, the White House, and the union officials that there is a lot of discontent out there. In other words, if all those who wish to vote NO instead voted yes because the situation is hopeless, we would end up with a vote that appears to say that we are happy with this when we know that is not the case. **Vote No!**
- This vote is not just about this contract and particular circumstances. It is about power and achieving control to win in the long run. We **MUST** show the carriers, the government, and the union officials that they cannot simply cram this down our throats without resistance. If we capitulate, this will signal that the next round of bargaining can be conducted similarly. **Vote No!**
- There is no guarantee that we will get something worse if we vote this contract down. There is, in fact, an argument to be made that the basic PEB is not much different than the TA brokered by the government. We can mobilize and fight for a better deal. **Vote No!**
- We need to show the carriers we will not be bullied. If we reject the TA, there is the prospect that resisting the carriers will force them to back down. They may be willing to concede more if they see a strike as imminent. They are on the defensive. We could see a better deal proposed if we vote this one down. **Vote NO!**
- Congress may opt NOT to jam the PEB or the TA down our throats. Our act of defiance could send a strong message. It is conceivable that we could get a better deal from Congress. **Vote NO!**
- Working people across the country are watching intently. Already, railroad workers are looked up to for our resistance. If we vote this down, millions of workers will be inspired by our actions, and millions will come to our aid and assistance if we strike. **Vote NO!**

So, fellow rail workers, here is the case for voting NO if, indeed, that is what your gut is telling you. If you wish to vote yes because you like this contract, more power to you. Nevertheless, if you want to vote NO, there are many reasons to put aside your fears, put aside your pessimism and your fatalism, take courage in your convictions, stand together with your fellow workers, do like them, and **Vote NO!**

Railroad Workers United

