



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

"The Rank & File in Action!"

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RWU Statement on the Firing of STB Member Robert Primus

Railroad Workers United (RWU) is angered and offended by President Trump's illegal firing of Surface Transportation Board member Robert Primus on August 27th. We condemn this action and demand Primus' immediate reinstatement. The official reason cited - that his position is being eliminated - is utter nonsense. The Board was established more than three decades ago as an independent federal agency, tasked with providing regulatory oversight of the nation's railroads, and was designed by legislation to function with a total of five members. Under the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995—the law that established the STB—Board members can only be removed for cause: specifically, inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.

Primus had an exemplary record while serving at the STB. He had been an outspoken voice for the rights and wellbeing of shippers, passengers, and railroad workers. Primus was known for his outspoken views, including criticism of the Class One carriers when they failed to provide adequate customer service to the nation's shippers, did not live up to their commitments to Amtrak, or disrespected railroad workers. Primus was the lone member of the STB to vote NO on the most recent Class One rail merger, the 2023 amalgamation of the Canadian Pacific and the Kansas City Southern.

It is obvious to railroad workers what is going on here. Powerful corporate interests are at work undermining the government institutions that were set up to regulate and oversee the actions of those same powerful interests. It is no coincidence that the STB will soon be hearing the case of the proposed mega-merger of the Union Pacific and the Norfolk Southern. The STB has the final word as to whether or not this merger is allowed to proceed, based upon its weighing of the evidence if such a merger is in the interests of shippers, passengers, workers, industry, the nation's economy, and the rail industry itself.

In the interest of the law, the integrity of our government institutions, and the ability of the STB to function and to make informed decisions affecting the rail industry in the coming years, we demand that Robert Primus be reinstated.

Statement adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 9/3/2025