



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

The Rank & File in Action!

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Press Release

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RWU Announces Position on PEB #250

In response to overwhelming opposition from rank & file rail workers to the PEB's recommendations, the cross-craft solidarity group Railroad Workers United (RWU) has issued a statement affirming our opposition to the PEB's limited and narrow recommendations that will do nothing to rectify the underlying problems with the rail industry today.

What most railroaders are so upset about regarding the PEB is not so much what the PEB is recommending in terms of wage increases (although most workers appear not too jubilant about that), but rather, what the PEB simply chose to ignore. According to RWU Organizer Ron Kaminkow, "This year was supposed to be our time when rank & file rail workers could hold their heads high, value their jobs, be proud once again to be part of the rail industry, look forward to the coming years, and ultimately, to their retirement from the industry. Unfortunately, the PEB Report has cast a long shadow upon those hopes and expectations."

Not only is the PEB's failure to address work rules and conditions a slap on the face to working railroaders, but that failure also betrays shippers, passengers, and the nation as a whole who have been hoping to see an end to the ongoing rail service crisis. According to RWU General Secretary Jason Doering, "By not addressing these issues and this generalized discontent among the workforce, the PEB has acted irresponsibly, their recommendations doing little to nothing to stem the tide of discontent nor address the ongoing mass exodus of workers from the industry."

In the last few years, a scenario unfolded like no other that any working railroader had ever seen. RWU Co-Chair Ross Grooters points out that, "What makes the PEB such a bitter pill to swallow for so many working rail workers is that we were poised to win this time. Increasingly, it appeared that history was on our side, that objective conditions and forces were at play that mitigated in our favor, right up until this summer and when the PEB issued its Report."

In the last week, RWU conducted a survey of working railroaders. Of the more than 3000 responses received, well over 90% stated they would not vote for a Tentative Contract based in the PEB, and stated their view that rail workers should exercise their right to strike.

Therefore, RWU states our unequivocal opposition to any Tentative Agreement (TA) that refuses to transcend the narrow recommendations of PEB #250. If any proposal is simply a re-packaging of the PEB without any substantial add-ons – especially regarding work rules – then RWU is compelled to oppose such a Tentative Agreement. In the coming weeks/months, the unions and the carriers will at some point reach a TA, at which time RWU will carefully consider the proposed contract and state our position accordingly.

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