



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

The Rank & File in Action!

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RWU Resolution Calling for Universal Coordinated Bargaining and A Robust Contract Campaign

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Whereas, In 2022, the last round of bargaining for the national contract covering over 100,000 railroad workers made headlines around the world, bringing attention to the crisis in the US railroad system and the poor conditions of railroad workers; and

Whereas, In November 2024 we expect Section 6 notices to be filed and bargaining over the national contract to begin again; and

Whereas, While a coalition of the various railroad unions was formed for the last round of negotiations, unity broke down as individual union officials began to accept tentative agreements based on the inadequate Presidential Emergency Board recommendations; and

Whereas, Section 6 notices had been filed in September of 2019 and workers worked for almost 3 years through the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic crisis without any progress made in negotiating for higher wages and better conditions; and

Whereas, Very little was done to involve rank-and-file railroad workers in negotiations or mobilize them in actions designed to put pressure on the companies in order to break the deadlock; and

Whereas, The lack of strike preparation carried out by the unions meant that the companies felt confident in delaying negotiations and not offering any serious improvements; and

Whereas, Despite the majority of railroad workers voting against their tentative agreements, the federal government, led by President Biden, intervened in December 2022 to outlaw any strike action and to force the inadequate contract on railroad workers; and

Whereas, the continued inflation and cost of living crisis has underlined the fact that the 2022 agreement was totally inadequate; and

Whereas, 2023 also featured a number of high profile contract battles from major unions and workforces around the country that clearly contrast the weakness of rail labors approach in the last round of negotiations; and

Whereas, UPS teamsters, UAW "Big 3" autoworkers, WGA writers, and SAG-AFTRA actors organized practice pickets, rallies, raised funds, and took strike action, appealing to the labor movement and broader public for support and reinforcements;

Therefore be it resolved RWU calls on rail labor to adopt a new approach for future contract negotiations, one based on real unity of all unions and crafts where no union settles until all unions have a satisfactory agreement, open negotiations with clear communication to the rank and file about progress, and mobilization of the membership for actions to build up a credible strike threat; and

Be it finally resolved that RWU is calling for and willing to help organize a conference of all members of rail labor committed to discussing, debating, and developing a strategy for an aggressive, united contract campaign going forward into the upcoming round of national handling in freight service.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee February 7th, 2024