LABOR SOLIDARITY:

Rail unions hold major rally to urge passage of Railway Safety Act



A fellow Rail Conference member from the BMWED (wearing red) joined BLET members (from left to right) Ulises Flotte, Div. 20, Ryan Snow, BLET California State Legislative Board Chairman, Jerry Padilla, Div. 660, and Jacob Klatt, BLET Div. 126, at the rally in Los Angeles.

In February, members of the BLET joined multiple rail labor crafts in Los Angeles for a rally to support the Rail Safety Act, the bipartisan bill in the U.S. Senate intended to boost industry safeguards in the aftermath of the 2023 toxic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. The act is a significant step towards improving safety measures within the railway industry, reflecting the collaborative efforts of different labor groups and lawmakers.

However, the bill has languished in Congress due to heavy opposition from rail industry lobbyists. The rally called upon Senators to take immediate action to protect rail workers and communities from the ongoing scourge of rail accidents.

Ryan Snow, Chairman of the California State Legislative Board, spoke at the rally on behalf of the BLET. Also in attendance were: **Ulises Flotte**, Legislative Rep. of Division 20 (Los Angeles, Calif.); **Jacob Klatt**, Legislative Rep. of Division 126 (Bakersfield, Calif.); **Jerry Padilla Jr.**, Legislative Rep. of Division 660 (Los Angeles, Calif.); and **Carlos Maravilla**, member of Division 214 (Long Beach, Calif.).

“It is time for us to take decisive action to prioritize safety over profit and to ensure that the tragic events

that have spurred this legislation are never repeated," Brother Snow said. "We should not and cannot wait for the big derailment that is destined to occur to destroy a community in California."

The rally was organized by the International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 19, the IAM's Rail Division.

Click here for a video of all speakers from the rally (Brother Snow is introduced around the 42:40 mark).

Click here for a photo gallery.