

Twelve Reasons for Railroad Workers to Vote NO on the Proposed Tentative Agreement

Railroad workers across craft and union have patiently worked long and hard to achieve a reasonable settlement and contract in this round of bargaining. Most feel betrayed by the recommendations of the PEB. Nevertheless, a Tentative Agreement has been reached between the officials of four of the twelve unions that are party to this round of national handling. All members party to this TA - IAM, BRC, TCU, and IBEW - are strongly encouraged to exercise their right to vote and to vote NO!

1 – We must maintain our solidarity and unity across craft and union. The union officials proposing this Tentative Agreement have broken ranks and turned their backs on the United Rail Unions. What good is it having a united coalition in bargaining if we cannot have a united coalition when voting for a contract? **Vote NO!**

2 – Work rules and working conditions are not addressed. Practically all of the changes that the unions proposed for their respective memberships were dismissed out of hand by the PEB. Specifically, no shift differential is granted to the shop crafts. **Vote NO!**

3 – Wage increases will mostly be offset by a rise in the consumer price index. While this might be the most significant proposed wage increase in 40 years, it comes when inflation is at its highest in 40 years. **Vote NO!**

4 – Ratification will set a “pattern.” If any or all of these unions ratify these proposed contracts with the carriers, this will initiate a “pattern,” making it much harder for the unions who wish to fight to win a good contract. **Vote NO!**

5 – Unethical “Me Too” clause is unfair and divisive. The tentative agreement contains a “me too” clause, which would allow these unions to claim for their members any benefits which any other rail union might ultimately win going forward. In effect, this amounts to some unions taking advantage of the other's efforts while doing nothing to assist. If a union is unwilling to stand in solidarity and fight, it should not expect to reap the benefits other unions gain through struggle and sacrifice. There is a vital union principle at play here. **Vote NO!**

6 – Current conditions provide an excellent opportunity for victory. Given the objective conditions: record profits of the carriers; a severe shortage of workers; supply chains in crisis; the rail industry and PSR discredited; the achievement of a universal bargaining coalition of all rail labor; a general upsurge in labor and union organizing; unions viewed more favorably by the public than at any time in the last 50 years. Now is the best chance we have had in decades to win something, not to give in. **Vote NO!**

7 – Underlying issues and problems not addressed. The rail industry is in a state of crisis. This tentative agreement does nothing to address nor rectify the underlying causes of worker disillusionment and dissatisfaction with their working conditions. Short staffing, long hours, harsh attendance policies, poor scheduling practices, a lack of time off work, and a generally inferior quality of work life would continue under this contract if ratified. **Vote NO!**

8 – Future solidarity and unity in bargaining will be compromised. If unions that are party to a coalition break away at the drop of a hat and make their own deals without consultation with the rest of the coalition, we can expect the next bargaining round to be a return of the bad old days of “every union for itself.” The carriers’ divide and conquer will hold sway. **Vote NO!**

9 – United we bargain – divided we beg. Giving in to bullies encourages more bullying. We have been bullied by the Class One carriers for a year, and this TA provides no relief. In fact, capitulation in such a manner will encourage more of the same, even an increase. We refuse to be on our knees. We do not beg. **Vote NO!**

10 – We refuse to be the victims of exploitation and condescension. The Class One carriers claim their record profits have nothing to do with us and that they alone take all the risk and bear the burden of shifting economic conditions. We disagree. We sacrifice our health, well-being, and lives for the company. We deserve a share of the enormous wealth we have created for them. We are worth more. **Vote NO!**

11 – We are essential workers. We labored long and hard through the pandemic – many of us without sick leave. **Vote NO!**

12 – The ranks of all unions and all crafts are determined to win this time. Rarely do we see such anger and frustration channeled into determination to win a good contract. In a survey of 3,250 rail workers at the end of August, railroaders from all crafts, age groups, and seniority responded with overwhelming (93%) opposition to the PEB recommendations, stating they would vote NO to any TA – such as the ones in question - based upon the PEB. **Vote NO!**

Railroad Workers United