

"An Injury To One Is An Injury To All"

Pennsylvania Federation

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Office of the General Chairman
Jed Dodd

November 12, 2007

To: All Amtrak Committees

Re: Status of Contract Crisis

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

After nearly eight years the Bush Administration has released us from bargaining and under law we are permitted to strike Amtrak, over our unresolved contract, on December 1, 2007. All of Amtrak's non-operating unions have been released and are on the same timetable as us. There probably will not be a strike on December 1 because it is almost certain that President Bush will exercise his right to appoint a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) that will put any strike on hold while the PEB holds hearings and issues recommendations for settlement. We have a right to go on strike if we are unable to negotiate a settlement after these recommendations are issued. This deadline will most likely occur in the middle of January 2008.

The time line is determined from the date the PEB is appointed and until it is appointed it is impossible to say on what day we will have a right, under law, to go on strike. However, in the past Congress has prevented rail strikes by taking the recommendations of the PEB and imposing them on labor and management as the new contract. They do this because they believe our role in the economy is vital and we should not be permitted to strike. The fact that they do not want to pay us as if the economy depended on our work is outrageous. These facts frame the circumstances we find ourselves in and we must consider them as we work our way through this crisis.

We believe we are entitled to the terms of our last two national freight agreements as a basis for resolution of this dispute. Those two agreements (2000-2004 and 2005-2010) had modest wage increases, health benefit cost sharing increases, benefit improvements and no work rule changes. Amtrak has offered to settle the dispute for modest wage increases, greater health benefit cost sharing increases than national, benefit improvements, eliminating half of the health care for our disabled members, health care cost sharing for retired employees and work rule changes that will break our union and destroy the working lives of our members.

We have formed a bargaining coalition with the Brotherhood of Railway Signalmen, the National Council of Fireman and Oilers and the American Train Dispatchers Association. We will be represented jointly at the PEB by a very competent law firm provided by the Teamsters, top notch economists and other experts. If seventy years of precedent is followed, the PEB should recommend that our settlement be around the terms of our last two national freight agreements. This is not a hard case to argue. A fair PEB could very quickly put an end to this eight nightmare by following decades of convention and recommending the terms of our national freight agreements.

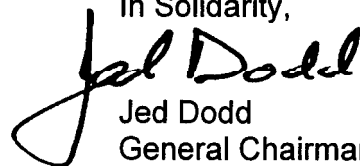
However, we have good reason to believe that George Bush will not appoint a fair PEB. This is the administration that has brought us the Iraq war, contracted out about 50% of the unionized jobs of the Federal government, and abandoned the people of New Orleans in the wake of the devastation from Hurricane Katrina. We have severe reservations that the appointees of President Bush will honor precedent, or justice, and will impartially make recommendations. After the Bush recommendations are issued the role that Congress plays in this dispute will determine our working futures. Your help is needed to ensure that Congress plays a positive role and does not simply impose the recommendations of the ideological bed partners of President Bush.

Attached is a bargaining matrix of the issues showing where the Union and Amtrak agree and disagree. It is broad and lacking in some detail, but gives you a good idea of where bargaining currently stands. The detail can be found in the actual proposals from Amtrak and the BMWED that are also attached. In addition, attached to the BMWED proposal to Amtrak are two sheets showing the effect of the National Freight agreement on the BMWED average rate on Amtrak, which currently is \$19.47 per hour. The sheets show the effect on wage increases, and back pay calculations, on the straight time worker and the average overtime worker during the period in dispute.

Please look over this material carefully. If we are going to win this fight it will require a major membership mobilization and this can only be accomplished if the rank and file leadership has a firm understanding of the issues and the problems that we are facing. In the near future we will be writing to the membership about these issues in a more general form and laying out the work that we will have to do to win this fight.

We will need every member to step forward and support the work of the Union in this next period if we have any hope of saving our jobs and protecting our conditions of work.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jed Dodd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jed Dodd
General Chairman