



A MESSAGE FROM

# Teamsters Rail Conference

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## **BMWED, RAIL COALITION ACHIEVE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH AMTRAK** *National Strike Averted*

(Washington, D.C.) – A tentative agreement on new contract terms was reached today between Amtrak and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) of the Teamsters Rail Conference.

“The BMWED members have waited and worked for eight very long years without a contract,” said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. “It was a surprise to us that a board appointed by President Bush, one of the most anti-labor presidents in history, decided upon a resolution to the Amtrak contract that awarded most of what we in rail labor had been fighting for.”

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who was present at the tentative contract signing today, said, “It’s a great day for the country, the workers and the passengers. This agreement gives respect to the workers. This agreement is important for our economic growth and stability.”

“The Amtrak negotiations took a hard toll on our members,” said Fred Simpson, President of the BMWED and Teamsters Vice President. “Now we are concentrating on explaining the terms of the agreement at membership meetings in preparation for the members’ vote. Once again, coordinating bargaining among the rail unions succeeded. This is another example of how joining with the Teamsters Rail Conference has provided strength in bargaining for our members.”

The tentative agreement’s terms closely follow recommendations of a Presidential Emergency Board appointed by President George W. Bush to investigate the prolonged contract dispute. Provisions include wage increases that average 35.2 percent over the life of the agreement, which is January 1, 2000 – December 31, 2009, or 3.1 percent compounded per year. Retroactive pay varies, but averages \$12,800, which will be paid in two installments.

“With this agreement, Amtrak’s insistence that their employees be treated as second-class railroad workers has been rejected,” said Jedd Dodd, BMWED general chairman of the Pennsylvania Federation, which represents many of Amtrak’s maintenance of way employees.

The tentative agreement is subject to membership ratification. BMWED members comprise approximately 2,000 of the 20,000 workers on the Amtrak system nationwide.