

Key Vote Alert

November 30, 2022

To the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce **strongly supports H.J. Res.100**, which provides a necessary resolution to avert a catastrophic labor strike that would shut down rail service in America. The Chamber **strongly opposes H.Con.Res.119** which would impose an unworkable, one-sided modification to a labor agreement that has already been agreed to by the leadership of all 12 unions representing rail workers and a majority of all rail workers. **The Chamber will consider including votes on both pieces of legislation – including procedural votes – in our annual How They Voted scorecard.**

A rail strike would cost the American economy \$2 billion per day. It would exacerbate rising prices and inflation, prevent the delivery of chemicals necessary for clean water, energy products for heating and manufacturing, and lead to the spoilage of fruits, vegetables, dairy and other agricultural products.

On September 15, the major freight railroads and the leadership for 12 labor unions reached tentative agreements (TA) on a new long-term contract. This deal was reached following years of negotiations, including efforts by federal mediators, President Biden's Presidential Emergency Board (PEB), as well as further negotiations by the parties and the President.

Congress would be wrong to amend the September 15 TA. Eight of 12 unions representing a majority of railroad workers ratified the September 15 TAs brokered by the Biden Administration. Four holdout unions remain – and they continue to press for concessions like extra sick leave that the PEB and the Biden administration already rejected. All negotiations involve some degree of compromise, but the record shows the Sept. 15 TA was agreed to by all sides and includes significant benefits for rail workers. The proposed modification to the September agreement is completely one-sided providing additional paid sick days to labor without requiring that they give up any of the other substantial benefits that a majority of workers prioritized higher, including: a 24% increase in pay, \$5,000 in lump sum bonuses, and comprehensive long-term paid sickness benefits that, depending on the role, can begin in as little as four days and last for up to 52 weeks. Congresses' imposition of an additional one-sided benefit would not only raise costs for those who use the rail system and thus American consumers, but it would also increase the risk of future strikes by rewarding the tactics of a minority of hold-out unions.

A strike by workers would cause enormous harm to the nation. Therefore, we urge you to pass H.J.Res.100 and reject any procedural votes that would amend the terms of the Sept. 15 TAs, including H.Con.Res 119. Congress has acted 18 times since the passage of the Railway Labor Act to avert a stoppage of national rail service. We urge you to do so again.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly supports H.J.Res.100, which is necessary to avert a catastrophic strike that would shut down rail service in America, and urges you to reject attempts to change the legislation through obscure procedural machinations.

Sincerely,



Evan Jenkins
Senior Vice President
U.S. Chamber of Commerce



U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Government Affairs

1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000
Hill_Letters@uschamber.com