

November 19, 2020

Amtrak Applauds Bipartisan Legislation to Help Railroad Workers Receive Increased Benefits

Washington, D.C. – Amtrak was pleased to see the recent introduction of *S. 4860, the Railroad Employee Equality and Fairness Act*, which would undo harmful, ongoing sequester impacts to the Railroad Retirement Board’s (RRB) unemployment insurance benefits. The sequestration law was written so that these benefits are automatically reduced each year even though budget sequestration does not apply to regular federal unemployment insurance. As a result, railroad workers are subjected to reduced benefits while such benefit cuts do not apply to the general public. This unfair impact to rail labor is even more concerning now given the current pandemic’s impact to the transportation industry and the rail workforce.

“Railroad workers have played an important role in supporting this nation and deserve fair treatment. We thank the Senate for their work and look forward to the quick passage of this legislation,” said Amtrak President & CEO Bill Flynn.

“Railroaders have had to take a reduction on their unemployment insurance benefits for too long,” said Artie Maratea, President of the Transportation Communications International Union (TCU) that represents onboard service personnel, ticket agents, red caps and customer service representatives. “I am happy railroaders have finally been recognized for their hard work by the Senate, by seeking to eliminate this reduction of their RUI by the introduction of REEFA.”

“The Railroad Employee Equality and Fairness Act will bring long overdue equality to our nation’s rail workers by finally putting an end to the unfair sequester of railroad worker benefits,” said Larry Willis, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO. “This legislation is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as benefits for rail workers and their families are needed now more than ever. We strongly support passage of this bill by the Senate.”

Amtrak looks forward to working with our labor union leadership to educate and inform Congress on the impacts to the railroad workforce during the pandemic and stands ready to do our part and help this nation recover.

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