

Railroad Operating Crafts United (ROCU)

"What We Stand For"

Unity of Operating Crafts: For decades, the carriers have played one craft off against the other to our mutual detriment. This lack of unity has contributed greatly to our lack of power, which has in turn hampered our ability to negotiate and enforce good contracts. We are unable to effectively confront the carriers on issues of vital concern to our membership—attendance, crew fatigue, discipline, safety, etc.—because we are divided. We all lost out last round with RCO. Now, the carriers are demanding the elimination of our crafts altogether, the dismantling of FELA, drastic health care concessions, and more. In the face of this aggressive attack, is there any doubt of the need for the greatest possible cross-craft unity? Therefore, the two unions should be merged, in a manner acceptable to the rank and file of both crafts, as soon as possible! We believe ROCU rank and file members can craft a democratic merger agreement and constitution to unite our unions. Such a merger will truly be by the members, for the members.

An Immediate Cessation to Inter-Union Conflict: We condemn the open warfare between the UTU and the BLET. We demand an immediate halt to the irresponsible and reckless name calling, mud slinging and finger pointing that the leadership has long engaged in. Both unions are guilty, both have sinned, both have a record of selling out the membership, this or that craft. It is time to call an immediate truce. ROCU is composed of both BLET and UTU members. We favor neither union in this destructive fratricide between brothers and sisters who are each others' natural allies.

Rank-and-File Democracy: Union leadership is all too often out of touch with the needs and issues of the membership. We need a union that is built upon democratic control by its members, not simply one built by amalgamating the respective top-heavy leadership and bureaucracies of the existing organizations. We need constitutional provisions that include, but are by no means limited to: direct election of officers at all levels, including General Chairmen; the right to recall of officers; term, salary and expenditure limits; and guarantees of protection for minority and dissenting views.

Membership Action: In addition to building unity and democracy, it is of equal importance that we build a union based on the mass action of the members themselves. For too many years we have allowed our unions to be "led" by a small handful, while the average union member has remained uninformed, uninterested and uninvolved. In order to effectively stand up to the carriers, we must overcome the cynicism, apathy and despair of the ranks, and build in its place a union of inspired, educated, and active members who are willing to take action on the job in defense of our jobs and our union.

Solidarity: For years, we have allowed the Carriers to whipsaw craft against craft, member against member. It's time we returned to the labor standard of "An injury to One is an Injury to All!" Only when we stand up for each other, go to bat for each other, and take action on the job in defense of each other, will we have a strong union. Remember, this is how unions—BLET, UTU, or otherwise—were built in the first place! If the trainmen on the BNSF in Portland are under attack, we ALL are under attack. When UP engineers are threatened, we ALL are threatened. ROCU strives to rebuild this spirit of solidarity.

No to Concessionary Bargaining: After decades of concessionary bargaining, rail workers have practically come to expect lousy contracts. We say NO! to further give-backs at the bargaining table. If the union cannot at least maintain the current standard of living and working conditions for its members, it will become increasingly irrelevant in their lives. We pledge ourselves to oppose any and all concessions at the bargaining table, and pledge to build a fighting movement of rank-and-filers to take the necessary action to defend our jobs, our livelihoods, our rights and our union!

Railroad Operating Crafts United

312-924-1437

ROCUtoday@gmail.com

www.ROCUtoday.com