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Federal Railroad Administration adopts safety measure pushed by Blumenthal



Annie Luden of East Haven, right, shakes hands with U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, with Federal Railroad Administration Acting Administrator Sarah Feinberg, second from left, and Luden's daughter, Patricia Luden, before the start of a press conference July 6, 2015, addressing efforts to improve worker railroad worker safety. Luden's son, Robert E. Luden of East Haven, a railroad worker, was killed in a work-related accident in 2013. Peter Hvizdak — New Haven Register FILE PHOTO

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U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal welcomed a new Federal Railroad Administration rule Friday that requires railroads to use redundant signal protection.

Blumenthal, who had called for implementation of the rule, suggested in a news release that it might have saved the life of railroad worker Robert Luden of East Haven, who was struck while on the job in May 2013 in West Haven.

“This new rule is a historic milestone, and monument to Robert Luden, a dedicated railroad worker who died doing his job on the tracks,” Blumenthal said. “Now his tragic death — which inspired me to fight for this life-saving protection — will not have been in vain.”

More than eight years ago, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) urged the FRA, which is the federal agency responsible for rail safety, to require that railroads use redundant signal protection technology, such as shunting, to prevent railroad employees from being struck and killed by trains, Blumenthal said.

According to the NTSB, the technology would likely have saved the life of Luden, as well as other railroad workers.

“For the Luden family, and all who have lost loved ones in such senseless, preventable tragedies, railroads should implement redundant signal protection immediately,” Blumenthal said. “Waiting for 2018 simply puts at risk more lives — and postpones the railroads’ moral responsibility to protect their workers.”