



Railroad Workers United

Solidarity • Unity • Democracy

The Rank & File in Action!

Railroadworkersunited.org • (202) 798-3327 • info@railroadworkersunited.org

RWU Resolution in Opposition to “Right-to-Work”

Co-Chairs

Ross Grooters, BLET #778
UP, Des Moines, IA

Jim Thomason, UTU #1292
CN, Two Harbors, MN

Jen Walls, BLET #238
BNSF, Seattle, WA

General Secretary

Ron Kaminkow, BLET #51
AMTK, Reno, NV

Recording Secretary

James Wallace, UTU #305
BNSF, Lincoln, NE

Treasurer

Hugh Sawyer, BLET #316
NS, Atlanta, GA

Organizer

J.P. Wright, BLET #78
CSX, Louisville, KY

International Steering Committee

Ross Grooters, BLET #778
UP, Des Moines, IA

Ron Kaminkow, BLET #51
AMTK, Reno, NV

Paul Matchett
WSOR, Janesville, WI

Hugh Sawyer, BLET #316
NS, Atlanta, GA

Cameron Slick, UTU #911
CP, Saint Paul, MN

Jim Thomason, UTU #1292
CN, Two Harbors, MN

John Vitaska, NCFO # 395
CP, Chicago, IL

James Wallace, UTU #305
BNSF, Lincoln, NE

Jen Walls, BLET #238
BNSF, Seattle, WA

Andrew Weir, TCRC-CTY #240
CN, Sarnia, ON

John Wright, BLET #78
CSX, Louisville, KY

Whereas, The “National Right-to-Work Act” – H.R. 785 - was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on February 1, 2017; and

Whereas, this falsely named legislation – if adopted by the Congress and signed into law by the President – has the potential to decimate union membership and decrease union power in the U.S.; and

Whereas, under such a law, employees in a unionized workplace (one in which the majority of workers have voted to be represented by a union of their choice) may not be compelled to join such union, nor be compelled to pay for any part of the cost of union representation, while receiving all of the benefits that the union bargains for its dues-paying members; and

Whereas, right-to-work creates a “free rider” problem of non-union employees, while those employees who stick with the union are compelled by the law to now subsidize such non-union employees, who are also entitled to all wages, benefits, and working conditions that the union is able to bargain for and win for its members; and

Whereas this free rider problem is compounded by the fact that in addition, the law imposes a duty of “fair representation” on unions, allowing non-members to obtain the same representational services as union members, yet without paying for such services, imposing a financial and organizational burden on labor unions; and

Whereas, statistics show that states which have adopted such laws in the past 70 years have lower wages and poor benefits, poor on-the-job safety records, higher infant mortality, and lower levels of education and public services; and

Whereas, on average, right-to-work states have wages that are 3.2% lower, employer provided health insurance 2.6 % lower, and employer sponsored pension plans 4.8% lower than their non-right-to-work counterparts; and

Whereas, For decades, Big Business interests have lobbied extensively to pass right-to-work legislation, receiving millions of dollars in grants from foundations controlled by the super wealthy and major U.S. industrialists; and

Whereas, basic contractual rights that railroaders have won over the last 150 years of struggle including good pay and benefits, seniority, the right to a hearing and due process before discipline, safety protections, retirement and more are *all* at risk if the pro-business anti-union forces succeed in weakening and/or eliminating our unions;

Therefore, be it Resolved that Railroad Workers United condemns the proposed national right-to-work legislation, a misnomer that delivers neither rights nor work; and

Be it Further Resolved that RWU urge all railroad workers to contact their elected officials and demand they oppose this anti-worker legislation; and

Be it Further Resolved that RWU urges the rail unions and all unions to brace for the coming struggle, prepared to use the organized power of the rank & file to take industrial action in defense of our hard fought for rights; and

Be it Finally Resolved that RWU urge all railroad workers and their locals, divisions and lodges to organize immediately to retain their respective membership in the event that such a law is passed by Congress and signed into law.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 4/5/17

Ron Kaminkow
RWU General Secretary
secretary@railroadworkersunited.org
608-358-5771

"We need to have faith in each other. We are in precisely the same position. We depend absolutely on each other. We know that without solidarity, nothing is possible, and that with solidarity, nothing is impossible."
Eugene V. Debs, Founder of the American Railway Union