

RWU Resolution in Opposition to the Criminalization of Workers

Whereas, the rail carriers promote a form of safety, known as Behavior Based Safety" (BBS), that shifts the blame away from the company's failure to provide a safe workplace and instead lay the blame for accidents, injuries and fatalities on workers' "behavior"; and

Whereas, in doing so, systemic hazards go unnoticed and unchecked, as this ideological perspective denies that the employer could have any failings since all accident and injuries are the result of individual failings of individual workers; and

Whereas, RWU has vehemently opposed the practice of BBS since our Founding Convention in 2008; and

Whereas, the logical extension of this perspective is outright criminalization of rail workers when an accident or injury occurs; and

Whereas, in recent years, rail corporations have in fact moved to criminalize worker behavior to skirt blame and focus away from their own failed policies and procedures, recklessness and irresponsibility; and

Whereas, the recent indictments of both Canadian and U.S. rail workers who have been involved in train wrecks have set the tone for this criminalization process; and

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that RWU condemns this process of criminalization of railroad workers; and

Be it Further Resolved, that RWU, together with its sister organization - the Railroad Worker Education and Legal Defense Foundation, pledges to support railroad workers who are criminalized for on-the-job incidents and fall victim to this insidious and dangerous and reactionary perspective; and

Be it Finally Resolved, that RWU call on the various rail unions to stand by their members and fight vigorously to defend them when their behavior is criminalized.