

Pennsylvania and Ohio educators pass resolution supporting railroad workers

The Pennsylvania and Ohio Educators' Rank-and-File Safety Committee
6 December 2022

Pennsylvania and Ohio educators meeting on Thursday evening voted unanimously to approve the statement below and call upon workers to support the railroad workers and oppose the Biden administration and Congress conspiracy to end workers' right to strike.

Educators, Parents and students who would like to join the PA-OH educators rank and file committee, please fill out the form [here](#).

The Pennsylvania and Ohio Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee fully supports the Railway workers' rejection of any sellout contract. Whether such contracts are forced on railroaders through conspiracies by the carriers and unions, or by the carriers and unions in concert with the Biden administration, courts and Wall Street—all such contracts deserve to be rejected in their entirety.

Further, we call on the working class, in every location, sector and trade, to stand with the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee in its historic struggle to unite railroaders and all workers against the ongoing attacks by the ruling classes on the basic rights of railroaders and the whole working class.

Recent actions by the Biden administration and Congress threaten workers' right to strike. Also under threat is the right to reject malicious contracts. Moreover, as union bureaucracies align with the administration and carriers, workers are left with no voice in this process. An “option” to ratify a miserable contract versus its imposition by congressional fiat is no “choice” whatsoever. That workers are blithely manipulated into such a position shows the complete absence of commitment to democracy by the ruling classes, and the complete betrayal by equally guilty union executives.

It is instructive to compare the day-to-day disinterest and inertia regarding railroader grievances, with the focused, electrifying speed in which corporate and business interests are resolved. With the aid of the

reactionary Railway Labor Act, workers face myriad procedural barriers to strike action. Ceaseless mediation and endless delays seek the perpetual postponement of every initiative. And again, all this is done with the full complicity of union bureaucrats.

But let 400 business groups demand that Congress prevent a railroad strike and lethargy is forgotten! Phone calls are made and plans are laid. When Wall Street, the Fed or rail carriers speak, all haste is employed. Politicians spring into action and union bureaucrats bow in abject servility, happy for the opportunity to sell out their membership in the service of their true masters. Congress makes a law, and an obedient media circulates corporate-friendly narratives in the hope of manufacturing opposition to a strike.

But railroaders are not stupid. They have seen their position decline over years. They know that these circumstances are not the result of a system failure. They know that this is in fact the capitalist system working as it is intended to work, and for whom it is intended to work under the rule of capital. They understand that capitalism is intended to work one way for those who organize the capital, while working very differently for the workers who produce it.

Since obscene levels of profit require obscene levels of repression, capitalism organizes society in preparation to impose brutal conditions on workers. This does help amass great profit; but that is ONLY as long as the administration, courts and police, along with fiscal institutions and corporations coordinate actions to repress the working class. For years, railway unions facilitated this process. And railroaders can resist these stratagems ONLY as they likewise join together and are joined by other workers. This is why we as educators and public education supporters stand with railway workers.

It is essential that all logistics workers and workers from every sector come together to support railway workers in

this critical struggle. The denial of the right to strike and the right to vote down rancid contracts won't end with railroaders. The same argument of "economic necessity" which demands that railroad worker rights be overturned will soon enough overturn the rights of all workers.

Left unchallenged, these machinations will reach into other industries. It will be airline workers, longshoremen, barge, tugboat and ship workers, truckers and any workers involved in moving goods. It will extend then into the energy, communications and manufacturing sectors, and every other sector. Indeed, this already happens here and abroad. Modern production is a global phenomenon, and only as all workers stand together can capitalism's stratagems be defeated.

The Pennsylvania and Ohio Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee denounces as invalid, illegitimate and inoperative any contract that railroaders have already rejected. We insist that any suspension of railroad workers' democratic and constitutional rights is equally invalid, illegitimate and inoperative. We call workers everywhere to stand with railroad workers NOW! This attack on railroaders must not be made into a precedent for future attacks on other sections of the working class!

Workers should recognize that the conditions they face are identical to what railroaders endure: vicious scheduling, understaffing, decline in real wages under inflationary policies, attacks on job security and safety, and more. We condemn the accumulation of massive corporate profit through exploitation and the repression of worker struggles. We denounce the amassing of corporate wealth as the corollary to the present gathering of horrendous social misery.

We join the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee in denouncing union bureaucracies for worsening labor conditions by sabotaging strikes, and by acting in violation of clear rank-and-file instructions. We condemn in particular repeated attempts to revive contracts which workers rejected decisively, the repeated delay of contract votes and strike deadlines, the allowance of time for Congress to prepare anti-strike legislation, and ongoing refusal to consult with the membership they pretend to represent.

We scorn the proposed amendment that tried to give a "progressive" appearance to a hideous contract by adding a paltry, 7 days of paid sick leave. This does not address the cruel 24/7 "on call" policy, below-inflation rate wage increases or other grievances. That would cost less than 1 percent of railroad profits—railways being the most profitable business in the country.

We reject as an outrage the claim that an injunction is needed to protect working people! There was no injunction to protect working people from permanent pandemic, from war, from World War III, from thermonuclear holocaust, from domestic fascism, from hunger, from collapsing schools, or from near-daily mass shootings. But when working people experience "shortages" (i.e., are unable to purchase our for-profit goods), there is a sudden outburst of concern for worker interests! What insolence! In the face of capitalism's crimes and public indecencies, we utterly reject the racket of "protection." But we acknowledge that Congress, the ruling class, corporations and their union lackeys very much fear a broad fight for real wages and decent working conditions. And we affirm that their fear is very well founded!

We affirm that railroaders are critical to the US economy. This fact, with the support of the broader working class, gives rail workers power that Congress can only envy. But this power must be united and wielded for and by workers themselves. It has been said that the strength of the bourgeoisie is that it knows its weakness, and the weakness of the working class is that it does not know its strength. We call the working class in every sector and industry to wake up to its strength, to refuse class collaboration and to act in its own interest by forming independent, rank-and-file committees in every shop and workplace.

The only way to prevent the sabotage of working class initiatives is to take those struggles from the hands of those determined to subject worker interests to corporations, banks, Wall Street, the administration, Congress and their union bureaucrat-lackeys. The Pennsylvania and Ohio Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee calls workers everywhere to join us in standing with Railroaders.



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