



**REVISED: Tell your U.S. Senators to support bill S. 4860 to end RRB benefit cuts**

The Teamsters Rail Conference and the Transportation Trades Department (TTD) of the AFL-CIO are urging leaders of the United States Senate to support legislation (S. 4860) that would end the unfair cuts to Railroad Retirement Sickness and Unemployment benefits, known as sequestration. *As a follow up to the message sent earlier today, the bill number has been revised to S. 4860.*

As background, unemployment and sickness benefits payable under the RUIA have been sequestered or reduced since 2013, as part of a package of automatic spending cuts required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), which was passed in August 2011. Currently, RUIA unemployment benefits are being sequestered at the rate of 5.7%, as are RUIA sickness benefits.

As the railroad community continues to endure the effects of the pandemic, the time is now to correct this long standing legislative error and ensure that all rail workers receive the benefits they deserve as they struggle with layoffs, are suffering from COVID-19, or are caring for loved ones who are ill.

Called the Railroad Unemployment Equity and Fairness Act (“REEF Act”), S. 4860 would ensure that unemployed railroad workers receive fair and equal unemployment benefits by removing the harmful sequester that singles out railroad workers. The bipartisan bill was introduced by Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in late October 2020.

In a November 9 letter to all United States Senators, TTD President Larry Willis and Teamsters Rail Conference President and BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce wrote: “The REEF Act ends the unfair sequestration of Railroad Retirement Sickness and Unemployment benefits for railroad workers who become unemployed or sick on the job. Unlike traditional state unemployment insurance benefits, the Railroad Retirement Board’s unemployment insurance benefits are subjected to sequester as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011. Without a legislative fix, railroaders and their families will continue to be unjustly shortchanged and face a 5.7% reduction rate to their benefits.”

Please contact your Senators immediately and ask them to cosponsor the REEF Act and to support its passage in this Congress. If you are unaware of who your Senators are, a list can be found at:

[https://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

*A message from the BLET Mobilization Team*