



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS

Rail Labor Division

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and the Rail Labor Division (RLD) of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), we urge you to fully fund the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) in the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. Specifically, we ask that any conference report include no less than the House-passed RRB funding level of \$135.5 million for administration of the Railroad Retirement Act and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. Of that total, we support the RRB's no year funding request that up to \$13,460,000 be allocated for crucial and overdue information technology (IT) modernization projects.

RRB is an independent agency that administers disability, retirement-survivor and unemployment-sickness insurance benefit programs to hundreds of thousands of current and former railroads workers across the country. The expenditures requested here come solely from the RRB's trust funds and do *not* require appropriated funds from general revenues.

Chronic underinvestment in the RRB's administrative and operations budget has severely limited the agency's capabilities and has resulted in a woefully understaffed agency. This inefficient system drastically slows service, exposes sensitive data to cybersecurity risks and puts roadblocks in the way of cost saving efforts. RRB's antiquated IT system is a major contributor, for example, to the unacceptable average wait time of nearly 345 days to approve or deny a

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disability claim. Without an increase to RRB's administrative budget, increased processing and wait times, temporary office closures, and delayed payments will worsen at a time when RRB expects its casework backlog to expand.

We therefore respectfully request that Congress provide the RRB with no less than \$135.5 million in FY 2020 funding to address both its critical operational, staffing and IT modernization needs.

Sincerely,



Ian Jefferies
President and CEO
Association of American Railroads



F. L. McCann
Chair
Rail Labor Division