

## **Bloomberg Government**

### **TRANSPORT BRIEF: Rail Safety Bill Waiting Six Months After Crash**

By Lillianna Byington and Andrew Small | August 3, 2023 6:06AM ET

Today marks six months since a train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio drew national attention to rail safety — and workers want the anniversary to jump-start action.

“On this somber occasion, rail labor unions once again renew our calls for safety reforms,” the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO said in a statement Thursday. “To the people of East Palestine: we have not forgotten you.”

Despite the initial inertia behind a legislative push for reforms to the industry, progress on moving changes forward in Congress is stalled. Unions are using the half-year mark to urge Congress to pass a comprehensive rail safety bill, pointing to more than 60 high-profile derailments since the Norfolk Southern chemical train derailed in Ohio, Lillianna Byington reports.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee advanced bipartisan legislation (S. 576) to bolster rail safety regulations in May with support from just two Republicans on the panel. The bill faces GOP opposition in the Senate and the House.

Republicans “seem to be afraid” of supporting the bill, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), chair of the committee, said last week. But senators are trying to advance the bill on the floor when they return from recess. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said at a press conference last week they’re “making progress.”

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