



SIGN ON DEADLINE: Monday, April 29 COB

Leads: Rep Melanie Stansbury, and Labor Caucus Co-Chairs Reps Donald Norcross, Mark Pocan, Debbie Dingell, and Steven Horsford

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our affiliated unions, representing more than a million railroad and airline workers, the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO urges you to join Representatives Stansbury, Norcross, Pocan, Dingell, and Horsford in a letter to appropriators advocating for at least \$16 million in funding for the National Mediation Board (NMB) in the Fiscal Year 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill.

Created by Congress through the Railway Labor Act (RLA), the NMB plays an essential role in the facilitation of labor-management relations in the aviation and rail industries. Our affiliated unions collectively represent mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, airline catering workers, engineers, conductors, maintenance of way employees, and other aviation and rail workers critical to safe and efficient passenger travel and interstate commerce. These workers are best served when the NMB is well-resourced and reliably staffed with public servants who understand the importance of collective bargaining and who will seek fair and timely resolutions when disputes arise.

The National Mediation Board has gone underfunded for too long; its funding level has been increased by less than \$2 million since FY2011, which has not kept pace with inflation. In recent years, disputes have often taken years to resolve, due to limited staffing, extreme backlogs, and the resources diverted for implementing a much-needed return to an electronic voting system and bringing the agency into compliance with new federal cybersecurity mandates. Thus, strong funding of at least \$16 million is needed to ensure the NMB has all the tools necessary to settle disputes in a timely manner so workers and management can move forward.

To join us in supporting strong funding for the National Mediation Board in the FY25 appropriations bill -- and the airline and rail workers that rely on the NMB -- please sign on via this [Quill link](#). If you have any questions please reach out to maura.weaver@mail.house.gov with Rep Stansbury, or tommy.wolfe@mail.house.gov with the Labor Caucus.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact TTD's Legislative Representative, Samantha Fazenbaker, at samanthaf@ttd.org.

Sincerely,

Greg Regan, President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

LETTER TEXT:

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin drafting the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to increase funding for the National Mediation Board (NMB), with a funding level for the NMB of at least \$16 million.

The National Mediation Board is an independent U.S. federal government agency that facilitates labor-management relations within the nation’s railroad and airline industries, serving approximately 500 railroads and 100 commercial airlines and their unions. The Board’s mission is to prevent interruption to interstate commerce by protecting the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively and by providing for the prompt settlement of labor-management disputes. The robust functioning of the Board is vital to the day-to-day lives of airline and railroad workers.

However, in recent years, dispute resolutions have taken years to be settled. Due to limited staffing, extreme backlogs, and the resources diverted for implementing a much-needed return to an electronic voting system and bringing the agency into compliance with new federal cybersecurity mandates, cases can often take more than two years to reach resolution between the date of the first filing and the date parties come to final resolution. Worse still, cases can be cleared out of the system after two years due to their status as unfunded liabilities.

The Anti-Deficiency Act precludes arbitrators from working on cases while the federal government is operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR), which has happened with increased frequency in recent years, including for six months this past fiscal year. An unmanageable backlog of NMB cases is created with each CR. As it stands, the NMB currently estimates that there will be 6,219 cases pending at the end of FY24, and 7,569 cases pending by the end of FY25. These numbers significantly exceed the NMB’s five-year average of pending cases. While a simple appropriation cannot prevent this issue, a more robust funding level can better serve workers by allowing NMB to catch up, including by appointing more arbitrators.

Additionally, the NMB’s FY25 Budget Justification anticipates that the volume of cases undergoing Alternative Dispute Resolution and grievance mediation processes will increase in 2024 and 2025, which would require extensive time and resources.

The National Mediation Board has gone underfunded for too long; its funding level has been increased by less than \$2 million since FY2011, which has not kept pace with inflation. Therefore, we urge you to increase funding for the NMB to at least \$16 million in FY25 given the Board’s clear need for more resources. We unequivocally value the rights of railroad and aviation workers to bargain collectively, and to be reasonably and reliably guided and protected by a stable force of public servants at the NMB who understand the importance of collective bargaining and who will seek fair and timely resolutions when disputes arise.