



December 5, 2024

Chairman Bernie Sanders
Senate Health, Education,
Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Bill Cassidy
Senate Health, Education,
Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

The undersigned organizations represent hundreds of thousands of rail workers and retirees across your districts and those of your fellow Committee members. We urgently ask you to schedule a Committee markup to consider Deborah Lynn Halvorson-Bush's nomination to serve on the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

As you know, employees in the railroad industry are covered under a separate retirement system which is administered by the RRB. This unique system, funded solely by the industry and its employees, provides retirement, unemployment, disability and survivor benefits for millions of rail workers. These benefits and services are essential to the lives of all employees and their families.

We strongly endorse Ms. Halvorson-Bush to serve as a member of the RRB. A dedicated public servant, she served four terms as a Senator in the Illinois State House. As a member of the Senate Transportation Committee she chaired the Airports and Tollways Subcommittees and also served on the Railroad Safety Subcommittee. Ms. Halvorson-Bush also distinguished herself as the first female Majority Leader of the Illinois State Senate.

She went on to serve in Congress as the Representative for Illinois' 11th District. During her tenure, she served on the House Veteran Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs. As 1 in 6 rail workers are veterans, we believe the RRB will benefit greatly from her exposure to veterans' issues and the obstacles faced by those seeking the medical disability benefits they have rightly earned.

Ms. Halvorson-Bush's commitment to public service, knowledge of transportation and rail policy, and demonstrated leadership skills make her a formidable candidate that will be a strong addition to the RRB. Yet her nomination has been pending since July. The rail workers who have paid into the system deserve a full complement of board members to ensure their benefits will be delivered in full and without unnecessary bureaucratic delay. We urge you to expeditiously act to ensure the agency is at full board member capacity in the remaining weeks of the 118th Congress.

Sincerely,

Greg Regan
President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Cc: Majority Leader Chuck Schumer