



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
America's Transportation Unions

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholdt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Chair Aderholdt:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I write to express our serious concern that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill allocates only \$126 million for the Railroad Retirement Board's (RRB) Limitation on Administration (LOA).

This level is \$1 million below the amount Congress enacted in FY 2026 and the amount proposed in the President's FY 2027 Budget Request. Furthermore, this allocation falls significantly short of the \$185 million for RRB's LOA that was requested by the agency, along with a bipartisan group of 80 House Members. That request reflected widespread recognition that the RRB needs additional administrative resources to serve the more than half a million railroad workers, retirees, and families who depend on the benefits they have earned and paid for. Rail labor, the Association of American Railroads (AAR), and the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) jointly endorsed that bipartisan request.

Most railroad workers are not eligible for Social Security or state unemployment benefits. Instead, they are only eligible to benefit from programs unique to the railroad industry. The RRB administers these programs, helping railroad worker annuitants and their families access the retirement, survivor, disability, unemployment, and sickness benefits they've earned.

The RRB's administrative costs are paid for by the rail industry and rail workers' contributions to the RRB Trust Funds, not taxpayer funds. Setting the LOA at the requested level would simply enable the agency to use its own Trust Funds to support railroad workers and their families and give them timely access to the benefits they have earned, and raising the LOA to \$185 million would not cost the American taxpayer a single dollar. Furthermore, the RRB's Trust Fund is healthy, with actuaries projecting its solvency for the next 75 years at minimum.

The need for RRB to access more of its own resources is obvious. The casework backlog keeps growing. For instance, the average time to process disability claims is now a staggering 14 months, a significant duration for any person to endure without receiving the benefits they need and have earned through a lifetime of hard work.

RRB's benefits processing systems rely on technology built decades ago, resulting in significantly longer processing times and logistical challenges for beneficiaries. Meanwhile, about one-fifth of the RRB's workforce is eligible to retire now, risking the loss of technological expertise and further hindering service to beneficiaries. The agency urgently needs resources to replace these positions and train new staff.

A \$126 million LOA would steer the agency in the wrong direction. It would cut administrative funding below last year's level while outdated systems, limited staffing, and growing backlogs continue to impair already extremely limited customer service for rail workers and retirees who rely on this system.

For these reasons, TTD urges the Committee to provide the Railroad Retirement Board's LOA at the requested \$185 million to ensure that workers employed at Class I, regional, shortline, and passenger railroads and other RRB annuitants have timely access to benefits.

Respectfully,

Greg Regan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', enclosed within a circular scribble.

President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO