July 15, 2026

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

The Association of American Railroads (AAR), the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA), and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) strongly support S. 4965, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) Stability Act of 2026. This commonsense bipartisan legislation will provide the RRB with consistent administrative funding necessary to address long-standing technology modernization issues, improve efficiency, and deliver the reliable, effective service railroaders deserve.

The RRB is an independent federal agency that administers retirement, survivor, disability, unemployment, and sickness benefits for rail workers and their families. Most railroad workers are not covered by Social Security and do not receive state unemployment insurance benefits. The RRB is the sole entity that provides these essential earned benefits to railroaders and their families, and the RRB is projected to stay solvent through the next 75 years. The earned benefits, along with the agency's administrative costs, are funded entirely through payroll taxes paid by the rail industry and rail workers into the RRB Trust Funds. In effect, only railroads and railroad employees pay the administrative costs of the RRB, which include processing claims, assisting beneficiaries through field offices and telephone services, and other essential services.

Though RRB's administrative costs are not funded by general fund revenue, each year through the appropriations process Congress must allocate a set amount of funds the agency can use for administrative costs. That constraint has created several challenges for the RRB in recent years, even as the RRB trust fund has remained solvent. As a result of chronic underfunding, RRB has been unable to modernize its technology and operating systems to improve the speed, efficiency, and service quality for retirees, railroaders, and their families. Railroaders have experienced unprecedented delays in service, with the waiting period for an initial adjudication of disability claims extending beyond 400 days. Much of the RRB's benefits-processing infrastructure relies on legacy systems built decades ago, using outdated programming language and specialized expertise and institutional knowledge that is lost every time agency staff retire. Combined with ongoing staffing issues across the agency, the constraints on RRB's administrative funding are directly impacting its ability to fulfill its mission and negatively affecting railroaders and retirees who rely on the RRB.

The RRB Stability Act will address those challenges by providing a stable, consistent funding stream allocated from its trust fund that will allow RRB to address its most pressing administrative challenges head on while having the security of a predictable budget for administrative expenses over a multiyear period rather than relying on an annual process that has led to its current challenges. This funding will come from the payroll taxes paid by the rail industry and rail workers.

Critically, the legislation will provide additional targeted funding in the first five years to ensure that RRB completes a full transition from its legacy operating systems to a new, more efficient system. The technology modernization funding will support efforts to strengthen program administration, reduce long-term maintenance costs, improve cybersecurity protections, and enhance service delivery. When that critical project is completed, RRB will continue to benefit from steady, reliable funding that allows the Board to better plan and budget for the future and to handle changes in the railroad workforce over time. This legislation will ensure that RRB's administrative processes and technology are as efficient and sustainable as the fund itself and that railroaders know the benefits they earned will be there when they need them most.

On behalf of the rail industry and rail labor, we strongly support this legislation because it will ensure the RRB can continue to fulfill its mission and provide high-quality, dependable service to railroad workers, retirees, and their families in the decades ahead.

Thank you,

The Association of American Railroads

The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters