



DAILY NEWS UPDATES
WWW.BLE-T.ORG

Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011
VOLUME 25, ISSUE 2

PUBLISHED BY THE BLET, A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



THE EPICENTER OF THE WAR ON WORKERS: Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa addresses pro-union protesters who packed the state capitol in Madison, Wisc.

Stop the war on workers!

WAR ON WORKERS IN WISCONSIN, OHIO AND ACROSS THE NATION

BLET members have been on the front lines in Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states where labor unions have fallen under attack from ultra-conservative politicians.

This war on workers has been particularly vicious in Wisconsin and Ohio, where newly elected governors are employing underhanded political tricks to hammer though union-busting legislation (see Page 3 for background).

"This is a critical juncture for the labor movement," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "An injury to one is an injury to all. It's just a matter of time

before these attacks on public sector unions shift to unions in the private sector, like the BLET. I encourage all BLET members to get involved and stand up for what is right."

HOFFA: NOVEMBER ELECTIONS HURT LABOR

Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa said the attack on labor dates to the November 2010 elections.

"Last November's elections brought many anti-union governors and lawmakers into statehouses throughout the country," he said. "These elections were financed by a wave of corporate cash never before seen in this country. "Newly elected politicians are

paying back their corporate contributors by attacking the voices of working people. Right to work (for LESS) laws are being proposed in a number of states, including Michigan, Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Maine, Minnesota and more."

BLET GETS INVOLVED

Countless BLET members are helping public employee unions fight to protect their collective bargaining rights by participating in rallies in Wisconsin and Ohio, Kansas, California, Arizona, Minnesota, Iowa and Indiana (see Page 4 for pictures).

In Ohio, President Pierce joined a number of BLET members at a massive rally in the state capitol

on February 22 and March 1. Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa and a crowd of union protesters estimated to be between 8,000 and 20,000 joined him.

Photos of BLET members in action at rallies across the country can be found on the BLET National Division Flickr website, www.flickr.com/photos/ble_tunion/sets.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The BLET National Division is getting many calls and emails from outraged BLET members who want to show their solidarity with the workers in Wisconsin and Ohio.

"It's critical that you call or write your representatives and

urge them to vote against 'right to work' proposals," President Pierce said. "Tell them to focus on what your state really needs: jobs."

Additionally, members can the Teamsters "Stop The War On Workers" website to find a link to a list of rallies in your area.

And on Page 3 of this issue, members can use the sample language provided to get their local, county or state government to sign a pro-union resolution.

"Our fight has just begun," General President Hoffa said. "These attacks in Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and throughout the country are reviving the labor movement and bringing Americans together in a way we haven't seen in many, many years." @

INSIDE

PRESIDENT PIERCE: The time to be involved is now, **PG 2** • **PRESIDENT HOFFA:** Stopping the war on workers, **PG 3** • **HOW YOU CAN HELP** **PG 3**

BACKGROUND: Political dirty tricks in Wisconsin and Ohio, **PG 3** • **TRANSIT BLUNDER?** War on workers hurts state transportation budgets, **PG 4**



New General Counsel

BLET appoints
Mike Wolly **pg 5**

In The Line of Duty

Brother Stanley L. Watts,
Division 354 **pg 6**



Saving Amtrak

BLET members flood
Capitol Hill **pg 7**

REGISTER FOR NEWS FLASH EMAIL ALERTS AT: WWW.BLE-T.ORG



BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

THE TIME TO BE INVOLVED IS NOW

As I have often said, one of the primary objectives of my Administration is to promote increased involvement by BLET officers and members alike. To put it bluntly, trade unionism is not a spectator sport; it is a participation sport where we can ill afford to sit back and let others decide our future. And moving from talk into action was never more urgent than it is today.

On February 22, 2011, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman and I travelled from our headquarters in Cleveland to Columbus, Ohio to march in a rally with other working men and women who are fighting the injustice being imposed upon public sector employees in Ohio. I returned to Columbus a week later on March 1, 2011, along with General President Hoffa and thousands of working men and women to again march against the injustice of Ohio Senate Bill 5. We were joined at both marches by Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Hanely, BLET Division 757 member and State Representative Bob Hagan, as well as other BLET members from all across the state. We were part of a group of several hundred Teamster members who came to have their voices heard in support of all working men and women.

While this was happening in Ohio, BLET members were also joining marches and rallies in Wisconsin, Kansas, California, Arizona, Iowa and many other states. I offer my personal thanks to all who are getting involved in their state. If there was ever a time to get involved, it is now and here is why.

In recent weeks, the rights of working men and women have come under attack all across our great country. Politicians in several states are waging war on the rights of public sector employees to collectively bargain. They use budget woes to justify this "war on the worker," when we all know that the working middle class men and women of America did not cause the financial problems that plague our country. As time goes on, many



BLET members at the March 1 rally in Columbus, from left: Dan Rozick, Division 385 (retired); Tom Galloway, Division 4 (retired); Jeff Murray, Division 34; President Pierce; Tim Hanely, Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman; Jim Blum, Division 526; Tom Davis, Division 511; and Dan Cook, BLET Director of Benefits.

seem to forget that it was Wall Street's financial collapse, facilitated by little or no government oversight and risky business ventures, that pushed this country headlong into the recession that still plagues us, and has caused so many government pensions funds to become seriously underfunded.

State and Local budgets are all reeling, but not because of working men and women. The exact opposite is true, there are not enough working men and women making a decent living wage to fund the services that Federal, State and Local governments are expected to provide. Cutting the wages and benefits of taxpaying working men and women is not a long term solution to any State's budget woes because these cuts will simply reduce tax revenues even further. The politicians pushing this war on the workers know this and it is becoming clear that their

motives are much grander than just balancing a budget. Their real agenda is to once and for all break the back of the labor movement in this country, and that is not an agenda that will benefit any working class American.

Although Organized Labor is leading the fight against this war on the workers, all working class Americans, unionized or non-unionized, should be very concerned. Contrary to what some of the corporate-owned media would have you believe, this is not a battle between non-union working Americans and unionized working Americans. Unions are not the enemy or the problem. The truth is that unions are the only thing blocking corporate interests from taking this country back to the days of sweatshops and the 80 hour work week.

The long term goal of Wall Street, big business, and their agents in the political class is very simple; when the work-

ers make less, the corporations make more. That is why corporate America is bankrolling the politicians that are waging the war on workers, but the public sector is just one battle in this war. This war on workers will not stop with the public sector employees in Ohio, Wisconsin or Indiana. It will not stop until all labor organizations are dismantled and the working class of this country has no one to speak for it.

Now is the time to get involved in your union. Now is the time to get involved in the local politics of your city, county and state government. Now is the time to march. Now is the time to attend a rally and support our fellow working class citizens. That's the message I will be sharing everywhere that I go.

In fact, as part of my plan to attend BLET Local Division meetings every month, I attend-

ed my first 2011 Local Division meeting with the members of our first Division in Detroit on March 2 and shared this message with them. Division 1 represents engineers and trainmen who work for Norfolk Southern and Conrail Shared Assets, and the fellowship and exchange of ideas that we had can only help me as your National President. I also attended regular meetings with Division 6 (Union Pacific) in Boone, Iowa, Division 687 (BNSF) in Sioux City, Iowa and Division 3 (CSX) in Cleveland, Ohio.

Join me by attending your union meeting and by attending a rally to fight the war on the workers. Our strength is in our numbers, we must all be involved if we are to be successful.

Fraternally,

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an "official communication." This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official

interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

cy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member's unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. @@

**GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** BY JAMES P. HOFFA

STOPPING THE WAR ON WORKERS

Our fight to protect the rights of American workers continues. On March 1 I was in Columbus, Ohio to attend a rally with tens of thousands of Ohio workers. I was proud to join nearly a thousand of our Teamster Brothers and Sisters who were there to demand that corporate-backed politicians not be allowed to strip them of their rights as union members and Americans.

In Madison and across Wisconsin, thousands of workers once again engaged in peaceful protest as they have done every day since Governor Walker launched his attack on their rights. I also want to thank the many Teamster members across the country who wore red on March 1 as a part of Teamster Solidarity Day to show their support of these brave protesters in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire and all of the other states where workers are standing up for their rights.

Every day I am asked what else Teamsters can do to stop this war on American workers. In addition to continuing to attend solidarity rallies in your area, I'm asking for you to get your local elected officials to go on

record with their support for collective bargaining rights. We all know that elected officials like to make promises, but now we have a way for them to take action.

Ask them to pass a resolution in support of collective bargaining rights and America's labor movement. Get them to make a clear statement that they believe that collective bargaining is a fundamental American right and that the labor movement has been and continues to be a key element in a strong and secure middle class in this country.

Thank you for everything you have done and that I know you will continue to do in this fight. Please be sure to check teamster.org regularly for updates on our activities and more information on how you can help stop the war on workers.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



How you can help

Sample pro-labor resolutions available at www.ble-t.org

As BLET National President Dennis Pierce wrote (see page 2), the time to get involved is now.

In light of the recent attacks against unions and America's middle class, countless BLET members have attended rallies or participated in marches. But if you want to do even more, pasted below is a tool to help you take things one step further; it is a sample resolution you can take to your city, county

or state government. Have them sign it to show their support for America's labor movement as well as the right to collectively bargain.

The sample resolution comes from the office of Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa, who said: "All across the country, Teamster leaders have found elected officials who are willing to put their name on the record in support of our cause."

The attacks against working families

in Ohio, Wisconsin and Indiana are expected to soon spread to other states, such as Missouri, Maine, Iowa, Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania.

The time to take action is now. BLET members are strongly encouraged to stand up for what is right and to help protect America's middle class. @@

A COPY OF THE SAMPLE RESOLUTION IS AVAILABLE AT: WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/SAMPLE_RESOLUTION.DOC

BACKGROUND: Republicans successfully attack unions in Wisconsin, Ohio

Here is a rundown of what transpired in Wisconsin and Ohio, the two states where Republican politicians resorted to "political thuggery" and "corrupt" dirty tricks to force through union-busting legislation.

WISCONSIN: 'Political thuggery'

In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker created a false budget deficit and used the pretext of a budgetary crisis to wipe out unions representing state and local government workers.

In January, Walker forced through legislation that created \$140 million in new tax breaks for special-interest groups. Then he promptly announced a budget "deficit" of \$137 million and demanded concessions from public sector unions to offset the cost of the deficit — which he created.

The bill strips public sector unions of the ability to negotiate salaries, pensions, work rules and health-care benefits. It also allows for "free riders" who can freeloader by not paying dues. Payroll dues deduction is outlawed and unions are required to be recertified by the workforce annually.

Democratic Senators fled Wisconsin to boycott the unjust legislation, and the legislation did not move forward for several weeks because a quo-

rum of Senators was not present. However, Walker and Senate Republicans used underhanded political trickery to pass the legislation in the dead of night on March 9.

Under Wisconsin law, a quorum is required to vote on legislation relating to budgetary and fiduciary issues. Even though Walker insisted the union-busting bill was all about the budget, he stripped all financial components from the bill, which allowed it to move forward.

In speaking with the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Wisconsin State Senator Bob Jauch condemned the move as "political thuggery."

OHIO: 'Corrupted legislative process'

In Ohio, Governor John Kasich also cited a budget crisis as a reason to pass Senate Bill 5, which would basically destroy public sector unions. However, the bill's sponsor, Sen. Shannon Jones, R-Springboro, admitted that the bill is unlikely to have any significant effect on the deficit. In fact, when she introduced it, she could not cite figures on savings. And while Kasich insisted SB 5 was not an attempt to destroy unions, his previous public statements show his true agenda. According to the Columbus Dispatch, Kasich gave a speech be-

fore Ashtabula County Republicans in March 2009, where he said he wanted to "break the back of organized labor in the schools."

SB 5 would nearly eliminate collective bargaining for government workers. It includes provisions to ban strikes by public workers, remove binding arbitration and eliminate union negotiations over health care and other benefits.

On March 2, the bill passed out of committee by the smallest margin possible — one vote — but only after more underhanded Republican tricks.

Just before the vote, Senate President Tom Niehaus (R) pulled Sen. Bill Seitz (R) off the committee that was considering the measure because Seitz had opposed a Republican amendment to the bill and the process in which the bill was being considered. Seitz was replaced with another Republican who supported the measure, clearing the way for a 7-5 vote that otherwise would have ended in a tie.

MSNBC news analyst Lawrence O'Donnell said it was "the sleaziest legislative maneuver I have ever seen. I have never seen a more corrupted legislative process."

The move was widely condemned by labor and in the national court of public opinion.

OTHER STATES

In addition to Wisconsin and Ohio, union worker rights are under attack in many other states:

Indiana — House Democrats have left the state to protest passage of anti-union "Right to Work" legislation in February, denying the House the quorum necessary to pass the legislation. Labor unions organized a massive rally on March 10 to protest the harmful legislation.

Missouri — The full senate could consider RTW legislation within the next few weeks, though there are few details regarding the timing of a vote.

New Hampshire — Despite passage of RTW legislation by the House in late February, there is no indication as to when the Senate will consider the bill.

Michigan — The senate passed "emergency legislation" on March 10, giving broad powers to "emergency financial managers" appointed by the state to oversee struggling cities and school districts. One Michigan democrat condemned the legislation and said the republicans were attempting a "backdoor approach to what's going on in Wisconsin."

Tennessee — Republicans have introduced bills this year to do away with teachers' collective bargaining rights, and prohibiting them from using dues for political purposes. @@

Ohio, Wisconsin set to lose millions in federal transit funds

The union busting bills in Ohio and Wisconsin will hurt not only unions and families, but the traveling public as well.

Transportation officials warn that the anti-union legislation adopted in Ohio and Wisconsin could result in the states forfeiting tens of millions of dollars in federal funds for transportation.

Federal labor law forbids the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) from dispensing money for transit operation, acquisition or improvements without Department of Labor certification that the collective bargaining rights and working conditions of affected transit employees have not been diminished since the time when federal assistance was first granted.

"It appears Republican lawmakers overlooked this important information during their haste to force through union busting legislation," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "While both governors cited budgetary concerns for introducing the anti-union measures, it appears their actions may backfire as their budgets now stand to lose tens of

millions in dollars."

Wisconsin received \$74 million in federal transit funds this fiscal year. Of that, \$46.6 million would be put at risk should the collective-bargaining bill come to pass.

Additionally, Ohio would stand to forfeit a significant portion of its \$171 million in annual FTA funds. @@

BLET MEMBERS IN ACTION!

DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH, BLET members were busy on the front lines showing solidarity with public sector union workers in Wisconsin, Ohio and other states. On February 26, unions organized a national day of protest and scheduled pro-labor rallies in each of the 50 state capitals. BLET members participated in many of those rallies. And while

we cannot show you all of their photos here, you can view them on the Internet. Please visit the BLET National Division's Flickr page: www.flickr.com/photos/bletunion/sets

(Editor's Note: If you have photos of a rally that you attended, and you are not included here, please notify Editor John Bentley at: Bentley@ble-t.org.)

OHIO



WISCONSIN



ARIZONA



CALIFORNIA



KANSAS





2011

Calendar & Events

April 14, 2011

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

BALTIMORE, MD. AND ST. LOUIS, MO.

The Railroad Retirement Board offers free informational conferences to BLET officers throughout the year. Registration begins at 8 a.m. The programs begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m. In Baltimore at the Hilton Pikesville (1726 Reisterstown Road) and in St. Louis at the Drury Inn & Suites-Near Forest Park (I-44 and Hampton, 2111 Sulphur Ave.).

April 15, 2011

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

EAST HANOVER, N.J. AND CLEVELAND, OHIO

See listing above for times. In East Hanover, N.J., at the Ramada East Hanover (130 Route 10 West). In Cleveland at the Holiday Inn-Independence, 6001 Rockside Road (I-77 and Rockside Rd.).

April 18-21, 2011

BLET Western General Chairmen's Association

ANNUAL MEETING

The business annual meeting of the WGCA provides General Chairmen with the opportunity to exchange information about the handling of matter son their respective properties and to interact with officers of the National Division. At the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

May 22-24, 2011

National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen

ANNUAL MEETING

All BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen convene annually for the purposes of sharing legislative issues and ideas as well as offering assistance to newly elected Chairmen. The NASLBC will conduct its 2011 annual meeting at the Hyatt Crown Center in Kansas City, Kan.

June 12-17, 2011

84th annual Southeastern Meeting Association

ASHEVILLE, N.C.

DoubleTree Biltmore Hotel
Contact host chairman Dewey Brown by phone or email: (828) 683-9371 or drbrown.blet267@yahoo.com.

August 2-7, 2011

73rd annual Eastern Union Meeting Association

LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge, N.Y.
Contact host chairman Jim Brown by email: loco542@optonline.net

August 21-27, 2011

71st annual International Western Convention

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF.

Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo
Contact host chairman Mike Galvani by phone or email: (805) 927-2967 or SLOBLE664@wildblue.net.

September 18-22, 2011

76th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting

EL PASO, TEXAS

Camino Real Hotel
Contact host chairman Larry Schneider by phone or email: (915) 581-1373 or lschneider7@earthlink.net.

Mike Wolly appointed BLET general counsel

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce has announced that Michael S. Wolly, senior principal of the law firm of Zwerdling, Paul, Kahn & Wolly, P.C., which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., has been appointed General Counsel of the union effective February 1.

Wolly has been practicing labor and employment law for 38 years. A Fellow in the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, he has been involved in many complex lawsuits and administrative proceedings involving disputes under U.S. labor laws, including the Railway Labor Act, and has appeared before numerous Presidential Emergency Boards. Wolly also has appeared before many arbitration panels addressing resolution of nationwide collective bargaining disputes, including the landmark Family and Medical Leave



President Pierce with newly-appointed BLET General Counsel Mike Wolly.

Act arbitration in 2008.

BLET President Pierce noted that the appointment was well deserved. "Mike Wolly has been a key member of our legal team for a number of years, and has been a part of every significant case involving the BLET. We will be very well represented, and I'm happy that Mike is on board,"

President Pierce said.

"I also want to recognize the continuing support and counsel provided by Harold Ross," Pierce added. "Although Harold 'retired' as General Counsel in late 2004, he has continued to provide substantial representation and assistance to us, and has more than earned the time off he wants.

We will always be in Harold's debt and know that his advice is just a phone call away."

President Pierce also thanked George Faulkner of Faulkner, Muskovitz and Phillips, LLP in Cleveland, Ohio, for the assistance that he has provided to the BLET. "George has also been a key part of BLET's legal team and we look forward to our continued relationship with him."

In other personnel changes effective on February 1, long-time Communications Director Chuck Anderson has been reassigned as the President's Staff Liaison to the BLET's Information Technology (IT) Department, where he will assist in a long-overdue redesign of the National Division's technological capacity. Greg Ross has been transferred from the BLET Arbitration Department and now becomes Director of Communications and Coordinator of Legal Affairs. @@

BLET supports member, protects FELA before Supreme Court

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and 10 other Rail Labor unions went to the U.S. Supreme Court in late March to protect the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA).

Oral arguments were held on March 28 in the case of CSX Transportation Inc. v. Robert McBride. Brother McBride, a member of Division 742, was awarded \$184,000 in damages by a jury, which found that he had been injured on the job in 2004 as a result of negligence on the part of the railroad. McBride is represented by BLET Designated Legal Counsel John P. Kujawski of Kujawski & Associates, P.C.

Under the FELA, a railroad worker who is killed or injured on the job may recover damages if the injury or death results in whole or in part from the railroad's negligence. However, the railroads are attempting to make it more difficult for an injured or deceased railroad employee to establish negligence in FELA cases by introducing a higher "proximate cause" standard, which means the injured worker would have to prove that the railroad's negligence was the main or direct cause of the accident.

In an amicus brief filed with the Supreme Court, the BLET and the Rail Labor Coalition argue that such standards would cause safety to suffer.

"The major purpose of FELA was the promotion of safety within the railroad industry," the unions state in their amicus brief. "In light of the safety purposes of the statute, the Court has recognized that FELA imposes a continuing and non-delegable duty on railroads to provide their employees with a reasonably safe place in which to work. The position asserted by the railroad industry in this case,

The railroads are attempting to make it more difficult for an injured or deceased railroad employee to establish negligence in FELA cases by introducing a higher "proximate cause" standard.

as a practical matter, would mean that railroads no longer have this duty, and that there would be no effective deterrent to their negligence."

The Coalition also provided the Court with casualty data from the Federal Railroad Administration showing that fatalities rates are twice as high in recent years than they were in the late 1970s, when measured as a percentage of all casualties. The Coalition also provided data proving that the railroad industry fatality rate is significantly higher than the national workplace fatality rate, and that operating crews and maintenance of way workers suffer a disproportionate share of fatal injuries. It also pointed to two recent, broad expansions of statutory rights for railroad workers who are involved in or witness accidents and injuries as evidence that Congress understands that the railroads cannot be trusted to place safety before profits.

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the jury's verdict on March 16, 2010, disagreeing with CSX's contention that proximate causation is required for liability under FELA. Based on a claim of a split among the appellate circuits, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

"The FELA was the Congressional response to unique railroad industry hazards, one of the most dangerous workplaces in the nation then and now," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said.

"Congress desired for injured workers to receive fair compensation for their injuries, and FELA has helped make that happen for over 100 years.

"It is shameful that railroad corporations reaping multi-billion dollar net profits every year are trying to use the Supreme Court to increase their windfall at the expense of worker safety," Pierce added.

The FELA was enacted in 1908, and in virtually every congressional session for nearly 75 years, the BLET and the other Rail Labor Coalition members have been forced to resist lobbying efforts by the railroad industry to abolish or weaken the law, most recently in 2007.

In addition to BLET, the other unions involved are: American Train Dispatchers Association; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division; Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers & Blacksmiths; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; National Conference of Firemen & Oilers District of Local 32 BJ, SEIU; Sheet Metal Workers International Association; Transport Workers Union of America; Transportation Communications International Union; and United Transportation Union. @@

THE COALITION BRIEF CAN BE READ OR DOWNLOADED FROM THE BLET WEBSITE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/McBRIDE_CSX_AMICUS.PDF

President Obama nominates Walt Barrows to RRB Labor Member post

Walter A. Barrows, the candidate unanimously endorsed by the BLET and the Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee, has been nominated by President Barack Obama to serve as the Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board.

Brother Barrows is Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS). He was elected to this position in 1999 and reelected in 2002, 2006, and 2010.

"I congratulate Brother Barrows on this well-earned nomination," said Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President and President of the Teamsters Rail Conference. "Walt's expertise and his long



Walter A. Barrows

service as a Trustee for the Railroad Retirement Investment Trust make him by far the most qualified person for this important position."

Regarding Brother Barrows and other nominees, President Obama said, "I am honored that these talented individuals have decided to join this Administration and serve our country. I look forward to working with them in the months and years to come."

The nomination now goes to the Senate for confirmation.

ABOUT BROTHER BARROWS

Brother Barrows began his railroad career in 1974 with the Norfolk & Western Railroad and held numerous positions in the railroad's signal department. Within his union, in Locals 199 and 228, he served as Local Chairman, Local President, and Recording-Financial Secretary. Brother Barrows also served the BRS as the General Chairman and General Secretary-Treasurer for the Norfolk Southern General Committee. Prior to being elected Secretary-Treasurer, he served as a Trustee on BRS' Grand Board of Trustees.

Since 1999, Brother Barrows has served as a labor member on the joint health care subcommittee to oversee

the Railroad Employees' National Health and Welfare Plan. In the current round of national railroad bargaining, he chairs the Health Care Committee for the six unions in the Rail Labor's Bargaining Coalition. In 2004, 2007, and 2010 he was elected as a labor trustee to oversee the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust Fund.

The Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee is comprised of members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, both divisions of the Rail Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. @@

Rigsby reelected Chairman of Georgia State Legislative Board

James Rigsby was reelected Chairman of the Georgia State Legislative Board at quadrennial meetings in Atlanta from February 7-9, 2011. Brother Rigsby was elevated to the position of Chairman upon the retirement of A.E. "Buddy" White in August of 2008.

Brother Rigsby is a CSX locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 706 (Fitzgerald, Ga.). He joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 2001.

The following Board members were elected by acclamation: 1st Vice Chairman Dwayne Massengale; 2nd Vice Chairman Louis Myers; and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Christopher Douberly. Mike Poss was reelected by acclamation to the position of Secretary-Treasurer.

The delegates in session discussed a number of safety issues and also planned strategy regarding H.B. 273, a crew van safety bill that the BLET helped to get introduced in the Georgia State House.

Guest speakers included Georgia AFL-CIO President Richard Ray; Georgia

AFL-CIO Political Director Tasso Knight; BRCF International President Mark Robb; BRCF Board of Directors member Jamie Spivey; and Lawanna Poss, National Alternate Secretary of the BLET Auxiliary.

"Congratulations to Brother Rigsby on his reelection to Chairman of the Georgia State Legislative Board," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "I also thank all members of the Board for their dedication in serving the Brotherhood."

"With the ongoing attacks against labor unions in state houses throughout America, BLET State Legislative Boards are on high alert. I have every confidence these Brothers will do an outstanding job of representing and protecting the interests of BLET members in the proud state of Georgia."

The Georgia State Legislative Board represents approximately 1,500 members in 15 Local Divisions throughout the state. Their members work primarily for CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern. @@



From left: Armando Alva, Div. 646; Allen White, Div. 409; Christopher Douberly, Div. 706; Roy Wood, Div. 786; Chairman James Rigsby, Div. 706; Howard Ernst, Div. 803; Dwayne Massengale, Div. 779; and Tony Stroud, Div. 323.

In the Line of Duty

STANLEY L. WATTS

STANLEY L. WATTS, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 354 (Kankakee, Ill.), was killed in the line of duty on February 8 following a switching accident at a Norfolk Southern yard in Kankakee, Ill.

Brother Watts, 43, joined the BLET since February 1, 2006. He was a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer who was set back working as a conductor at the time of the accident. He was working as part of a conventional switching crew consisting of an engineer, conductor and conductor-in-training, and had gone on duty at 6:00 a.m.

He is survived by his wife, Sara, and young sons Zachary and Andrew. Brother Watts was born Jan. 1, 1968, in Chicago. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving from 1986-1990. He coached youth football and was

active with his sons' sports. He enjoyed camping and was an avid Bears fan. He loved spending time with his family.

A memorial fund has been established for the family of Brother Watts. Donations to the fund will be given to the Watts family to help with living expenses following the tragic loss of their primary breadwinner.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Brother Watts," said Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President. "On behalf of the entire organization, I extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Brother Watts."

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO:
KANKAKEE BELT CREDIT UNION
1370 W. COURT ST. KANKAKEE, IL 60901
PHONE: (815) 939-1688

Transportation Workers protecting each other since 1910



4000 Town Center, Suite 1250, Southfield, MI 48075-1407
phone: 800.514.0010 | fax: 877.633.1910
email: lecempa1910@lecempa.org | web: www.lecempa.org



BLET members flood Capitol Hill to save Amtrak

More than 20 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen inundated Capitol Hill on February 17, visiting nearly 100 offices to help save Amtrak's funding and to lobby on behalf of the interests of their fellow BLET members.

The BLET members included Division Legislative Representatives from 12 states, State Legislative Board Chairmen from five states and the District of Columbia, and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman. Most were visiting Washington, D.C., as part of the BLET Education & Training Department's Legislative Representative workshop.

"The visit by these BLET members came at a particularly opportune time," Vice President Tolman said. "Amtrak was under attack by opponents in Congress, who were putting forth amendments to a continuing resolution, a means of funding the government until a full budget can pass, that would strip Amtrak of its funding."

Of particular concern was an amendment presented by Representative Pete Sessions of Texas (H.AMDT.75), which would have crippled Amtrak by reducing the railroad's capital funding by \$446.9 million. Thanks in large part to the BLET's quick early morning actions, the amendment failed by a vote of 250-176.

The BLET members also asked these members of Con-



General President James P. Hoffa



BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce



Representative Bill Shuster (R-Pa.)



Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and BLET Vice President and NLR John Tolman at the BLET workshop for Legislative Representatives at Teamsters headquarters in Washington, D.C.

gress for their support on several other key issues of great importance to BLET members, including the Compassion Leave Act, NMB voting procedures amendments, and Hours of Service technical corrections.

The members attending the Legislative Representative's Workshop were: Roger Adams,

Division 124; Brian Burns, Division 87; Mark Chalupa, Division 231; Kenneth Ealey III, Division 141; Brian Farkas, Division 121; Doug Ford, Division 239; Rachael Grimes of the BLET Auxiliary; Kent Hansen, Division 391; Thomas Hebert, Division 312; Doug Krucina, Division 520; Michael Lacey, Division 769; De-

Wayne Lanham, Division 284; Ron Shawcroft, Division 29; and Erik Wood, Division 98. They were accompanied by Vice President Tolman; Colorado State Legislative Board Chairman Jim Wilmesher; District of Columbia State Legislative Board Chairman Herbert Harris; Illinois State Legislative Board Chair-

man Paul Piekarski; Nebraska State Legislative Board Chairman Randy Meek; and New York State Legislative Board Chairman David Kearsing.

"I would like to personally thank the BLET members who thought they were simply taking a legislative class, but ended up helping to save Amtrak," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "When I spoke to the group on February 15, the BLET was preparing them to advocate on behalf of our 'Compassion Leave Act,' which would amend the Family and Medical Leave Act. However, they very quickly changed course to help save Amtrak's funding, the jobs of 20,000 of their fellow members of rail labor, and the Railroad Retirement system, along with still trying to help their Brothers and Sisters by working on the Compassion Leave Act."

"This kind of action shows how effective our legislative department can be and also that we can make our voices heard in Congress when we work together." ☺☺

Risk reduction plans for railroads need employee input

Teamsters Rail Conference affiliates Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) were joined by five other rail unions in submitting comments to the Federal Railroad Administration on February 6 regarding implementation of a Congressionally ordered Risk Reduction Program (RRP).

The unions stressed that Congress intended for labor organizations to be included in the process of designing the RRP, creation of which was mandated under Section 103 of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. However, an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued by FRA on December 8 runs counter to the intent of Congress by allowing railroads to unilaterally submit their own plans without the input of labor.

"Employees are the most important component of any plan," BLET National President and IBT Rail Conference President Dennis R. Pierce said. "They must be allowed to participate in the creation of the plan and then con-

tribute to the plans in an on-going fashion without fear of repercussions. Therefore, both good faith challenges and strong whistleblower protections must be part of the regulations."

In addition to BLET and BMWED, the unions filing the joint comments included: American Train Dispatchers Association, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, Transport Workers Union and United Transportation Union.

"We expressed our concern that, absent FRA enforcement of the Congressional mandate, rail carriers would engage in their usual practice of unilateral dictation and implementation of safety practices," said Freddie Simpson, National President of the BMWED. "Absent clear direction from FRA at the onset of the RRP development process, we believe carriers will dictate a 'take it or leave it' approach to Rail Labor, thereby stymieing Congressional intent and leaving the public and rail employees still at risk for avoidable rail tragedies."

As part of their written comments to FRA, the unions pointed out that rail-

roads have been permitted to police their own safety for far too long, which has not produced the best outcome for rail workers. Therefore, Risk Reduction Programs must remain true to the Congressional mandate and require labor-management consensus, which is a critical part of reforming the rail industry's "failed" safety culture.

Additionally, the RRP should be scientifically based and data driven, and should provide root-cause analysis and rely upon non-punitive remediation.

"There is currently a punitive system for safety in the railroad industry, and as employees are the best source of primary information regarding safety, they must be able to report safety concerns without fear," President Pierce said. "This is the only way to reform what Congress believes is a failed safety system."

Of particular interest to operating employees are comments the unions filed regarding fatigue management plans. The Labor Organizations urged FRA to require 10 hours of prior notification as part of the RRP.

"Other than each job having an as-

signed starting time, the next best way to reduce fatigue for operating employees is the 10 hour call," National President Pierce said. "FRA acknowledges that knowing with certainty when you will next go to work is the strongest fatigue mitigation tool available and will virtually eliminate acute fatigue as a safety issue for operating employees."

Regarding concerns of Brothers and Sisters in the Maintenance of Way Division of the Teamster Rail Conference, fatigue management plans must address the cumulative effects of fatigue resulting from inadequate lodging and meal arrangements, long commutes to work sites, and — on the Norfolk Southern — camp cars.

The unions also called for improved training for rail workers, as rapid changes in technology across all crafts make the need for more training imperative.

A COPY OF RAIL LABOR'S JOINT COMMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE BLET WEBSITE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/RRP_JOINT_COMMENTS.PDF



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News

Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

A Division Of The Rail Conference,
International Brotherhood Of Teamsters

BLET Publications Committee:

Dennis R. Pierce, National President
E. "Lee" Pruitt, First Vice President & Alternate President
William C. Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer
John P. Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Rep.
John V. Bentley Jr., Editor
Bill Joyce, Art Director/Assistant Editor
www.ble-t.org • (216) 241-2630

COPYRIGHT 2011, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
VOLUME 25 • NUMBER 2 • February/March 2011

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS (ISSN 0898-8625)

is published monthly by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen,
1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

USPS: 0002-244 ISSN: 0898-8625

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET Records Department,
1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

Periodicals Postage
PAID
at Cleveland, OH.

2/11

Photo of the Month: February/March 2011

STOP THE WAR ON WORKERS: Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa with BLET members at a rally in Columbus, Ohio, on March 1 (from left): Tom Galloway, Division 4 (retired); Tom Davis, Division 511; Dan Cook, Director of Benefits; General President James P. Hoffa; Jeff Murray, Division 34; National President Dennis R. Pierce; and Jim Blum, Division 526. **Photo:** John V. Bentley Jr.



Are you a photographer? The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contrib-

ute their images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

BLET, MBCR reach tentative agreement

As this issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News was going to press, BLET members were voting on a tentative agreement with the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad (MBCR) that would provide members with general wage increases worth 13.7 percent over the four-year contract.

The agreement would run through June 30, 2013, with retroactive pay back to 2009. Bal-lots were mailed on February 17 and were due back to the BLET National Division on March 17.

In addition to the general wage increases, the agreement provides passenger engineers with increased certification allowances and instructor allow-ances. Members would also receive a \$1,000 signing bonus.

BLET members rejected an earlier tentative agreement with MBCR in 2010.

According to the Boston Globe: "The railroad engineers were negotiating separately, while train conductors and 12 mechanical and maintenance unions formed a coalition. After the engineers rejected a tentative deal last year, the conduc-tors split off to join them."

In a letter to members intro-duced the new 2011 tentative agreement, Amtrak General

Chairman Mark Kenny said, "There were some significant personnel changes made rela-tive to MBCR top management and at the bargaining table" fol-lowing rejection of the 2010 tenta-tive agreement.

He also said there was a "dramatic shift in the Carrier's posture at the table in terms of a genuine willingness to reach an agreement that would be accepted within a ratifica-tion process."

In terms of work rule chang-es, General Chairman Kenny wrote that pay for layover time will be increased from half-time to five-eighths time.

"It is truly significant as it breaks the long standing ceiling of half-time and sets in place a more advantageous threshold going forward in the next bar-gaining round."

Additionally, the health and welfare plan changes in the tentative agreement have been reduced from the 2010 tenta-tive agreement and are sub-stantially more consistent with the BLET National health and welfare plan.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is the public operator of most bus, subway, commuter rail and ferry systems in the greater Boston area. MBCR operates the commuter rail portion of the MBTA system. ©

NEWS FLASH!

REGISTER AT WWW.BLE-T.ORG TO GET BROTHERHOOD NEWS EMAILED TO YOU

Stay up-to-date with the latest Brotherhood news by going to the BLET website and signing up to receive BLET News Flash alerts via email.

The News Flash alerts are news articles from the BLET National Divi-sion website that are automatically emailed to you.

TO REGISTER, JUST GO TO WWW.BLE-T.ORG. In the lower right hand corner of the page, you will find an area to enter your email address to begin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.

Advisory Board January 2011 Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Cleveland; General super-vision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; Rail Labor Bargain-ing Coalition mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Teamsters General Executive Board, Washington, D.C.; AAR luncheon/TDD mtg., NMB mtg., Washington, D.C.; BNSF CEO mtg., Fort Worth, Texas; CRLQ winter mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E. "LEE" PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Pas-senger Dept.; Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; and National Negotia-tions; National negotiations and CRLQ mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Union Pacific on property nego-tiations, Phoenix, Ariz.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER WILLIAM C. WALPERT: General supervision of accounting dept., records dept., online services dept., IT Dept., tax compliance dept.; public relations dept.; Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; Advisory Board meeting, Cleveland; Secretary-Treasurer LM-2 GCA workshop, San Diego, Calif.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General office duties, telephone, corre-spondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Amtrak EAP mtg., Wash., D.C.; NMB mtg., w/ President Pierce and Board members, Wash., D.C.; AAR mtg., Wash., D.C.; TTD mtg., Wash., D.C.; Mtg. w/ Senator Stabenow and Senator Manchin, Wash., D.C.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; Transportation and Infrastructure organizational mtg. w/ Chairman Mica, Wash., D.C.; NRCC PAC briefing, Wash., D.C.; Mtg. w/ Governor of Massachusetts and Divi-sion 57 mtg., Boston; 90th annual Transportation Research Board conference, Wash., D.C.; T & I committee field hearing on high speed rail, New York, N.Y.; Labor reception honoring Chairman James Oberstar, AFL-CIO, Wash., D.C.; Monthly State Legislative Board Chairman conference call; FMLA lobbying effort on the Hill with two state board chairmen, Wash., D.C.; Receptions for various U.S. Representatives, Wash., D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, full NRAB; Labor Member, 1st Division; Labor Member, National Mediation Board Arbitration Advisory Forum; Director of Arbitration Dept; Assigned to Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Grand Trunk Western; Duluth Missabe & Iron Range; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern; Indiana Harbor Belt; and Belt Railway of Chicago; Assist GC Karakian with 8,047 claims issue; Assist CN GCs, conference call; Prep. For NRAB hear-ings; Referee Kohn, NRAB, Executive Session, Chicago; Referee Benn, NRAB, Chicago; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; Assist GC Linsey w/ disciplinary issues, NS/W&LE; Prep. For 2011 NARR annual mtg.; Assist VGC Pickett, KCS; Mtg. w/ CN/WC at Homewood, Ill., re: Art. 81(A) dispute.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, North-ern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western, Eastern Idaho), Central Region, Southern Region (New Orleans & Gulf Coast); Tacoma Belt RR; Utah RR; and Longview Portland & Northern NO, Longview Switching; Mediation with Montreal, Maine & Atlantic, Bangor, Maine; Contract mediation, CN/DMIR, Minneapolis, Minn.; CN/GTW contract negotiations, Cleveland; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; CN/IC con-tract negotiations, Memphis, Tenn.

VICE PRESIDENT WILLARD E. KNIGHT: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Commit-tees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; New York, Susquehanna & West-ern; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Indiana & Ohio; Ohio Central; General office duties; Ohio Central contract negotiations, Columbus, Ohio; Division 205 special meetings concerning new ID service, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; UP on-property negotiations; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC), CSXT; Nation-al Division Convention, Reno; Advisory Board conference call; Alabama St. Docks mtg., Mobile, Ala.; Review PLB 7265, CSXT DRC issues; PLB 6844 w/ GC Parker, KCS; Vacation; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; NMA North Mid Atlantic New York Dock transaction document, CSXT; Manchester ID negotiations, CSXT, conf. w/ M. Becker, T. Smith, M. Thornton.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Austin Western RR, Great Western; Advisory Board conference call; Austin/Western negotiations w/ GC Wilson and VGC Bratka, Tulsa, Okla.; MRL negotiations w/ GC Wilson and VGC Prath, Billings, Mont.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; Mtg. w/ BNSF GCs Gibbons, Williams, Wilson and BNSF labor relations, Fort Worth, Texas.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy; CP Rail System/US (Indiana South-ern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Montreal, Maine & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; Advisory Board conference call; Studied agreements of new assignments; Tex Mex dismissals, arbitration, Chicago; GC Koonce retirement party, Memphis; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; Discussions w/ GC Sam Parker and VGC Pickett, KCS; Consulted w/ Mark Whitchurch, KCS; Consulted w/ Pablo Rodriguez, Tex Mex.

VICE PRESIDENT STEPHEN J. BRUNO: Assigned to various Rail Safety Advisory Committees (RSAC); Regulatory duties as assigned by the President; Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; Conductor certification regulatory work, Washington, D.C.; Cab con-figuration issue, SEPTA; PLB 7341, LIRR; Risk reduction plan regulatory work, Wash., D.C.; Vacation; Fatigue management conference, Washington, D.C.; Transportation Research Board seminars, Wash., D.C.