

All Aboard!

A politically motivated drama involving rail workers and the National Mediation Board (NMB) is why IAM members are being asked to contact their elected representatives and demand the agency release more than 7,500 IAM rail workers seeking a new contract.

The NMB is the federal agency charged with overseeing contract negotiations between rail workers and management. The agency, now stacked with Bush administration appointees, is ignoring its legal obligations and allowing rail management to stonewall the collective bargaining process.

In December 1999, IAM negotiators first met with rail management to negotiate new wages, benefits and working conditions. During the next *50 months*, negotiators for the nation's Class 1 rail lines stalled the process and proposed massive rollbacks in workers' wages, work rules and health benefits.

The actions of rail management and the inaction of the NMB can no longer be tolerated.

The IAM is calling on all members to join a grassroots effort to pressure lawmakers to hold the NMB accountable. Nearly 1,000 IAM members have already contacted legislators to oppose rail management's bid to suppress rail workers' rights. In 2001, a similar effort by thousands of IAM members prevented United Airlines from unilaterally imposing regressive contract terms on its employees.

The first step is to learn more about the dispute. A special website with details about the negotiations, sample letters and talking points for visits with legislators is available at www.goiam.org/territories.asp?c=5089. The next step is to schedule a brief visit with your representative to demand the NMB act promptly to move the process forward.

"The conduct of the NMB extends beyond the current negotiations and will become standard practice if we do not take immediate action to protect our right to collectively bargain under the Railway Labor Act," said IAM General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. "I urge every IAM member to join this historic struggle to protect basic union rights."

Have you heard?

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