



# Railroad Workers United

***Unity—Solidarity—Democracy: The Rank and File in Action!***

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## **RWU Resolution of Support for Furloughed Rail Employees**

**Whereas**, the rail carriers of North America have reaped exorbitant profits from the hard work and dedication of the rail workers of North America; and

**Whereas**, railroad workers' productivity is known to have grown exponentially in the last few decades; and

**Whereas**, railroad workers did not cause the current economic crisis but rather had it foisted upon them by the reckless and irresponsible actions of banks, big business, government and an unjust economic system; and

**Whereas** thousands of union brothers and sisters are now subject to devastating furloughs and layoffs by the very carriers that they helped to make wealthy; and

**Whereas**, the rail carriers, the Railroad Retirement Board, rail unions and rank-and-file members all have an obligation to assist the less fortunate rail workers now furloughed by all means at our disposal;

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that RWU supports the following actions on the part of the Rail Carriers:

- Pay the health insurance premiums for furloughed employees until recalled to service.
- Pay relocation expenses for those who must relocate to a new terminal.
- Provide at least a sixty day notice of impending layoff of employees
- Shorten the work week for those on regular shifts -- with no loss in pay -- in order to provide employment for those on furlough.
- Rather than wait until July 16<sup>th</sup>, immediately implement the necessary changes and adjustments in staffing that will be necessary to meet the mandates under the new "Safety Bill", providing employment opportunities for those on furlough.
- Make full use of "reserve extra boards", provide opportunities for employees to qualify on new territory, utilize full crews wherever possible, allow employees to mark off when they wish, and otherwise provide for a workplace that keeps employees on the payroll.

**Be it further Resolved**, that RWU supports the following changes to the Railroad Retirement System of furlough benefits:

- Amend the system to facilitate early retirement, thereby freeing up jobs for a return-to-work for those on furlough.
- Amend the system's bi-weekly unemployment benefit for furloughed rail workers by raising it to a level on par with state unemployment rates such as New York and California.
- Amend the system's eligibility to collect unemployment benefit beyond the current six months.

**Be it further Resolved**, that RWU calls upon the rail unions to take the following actions:

- Adopt the above positions and build campaigns in defense of our fellow workers who are unemployed.
- Educate and otherwise assist furloughed members in seeking and obtaining unemployment and other benefits available to laid off workers.
- Utilize the time, energy and power of the unemployed themselves by organizing unemployed rail worker participation in the campaign.
- Organize those union members still employed to materially support those on furlough through yard office food drop boxes, bucket collections of funds, raffles & drawings, benefit concerts & suppers, etc.
- Encourage their members to remember that others are furloughed; therefore refrain from performing extra work that in effect takes a job from a less senior union brother or sister.

**And Be it Finally Resolved** that RWU encourages its members and supporters across North America to circulate this resolution as broadly as possible, making copies for co-workers, posting it at workplace locations, and bringing it to local union meetings for consideration and adoption.

***Adopted by Railroad Workers United 4-07-09***