



National negotiations update: Coordinated Bargaining Group Unions say contract negotiations take a “step backwards”

As part of our ongoing effort to conclude national contract negotiations, the Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG) met with the nation’s freight rail Carriers (NCCC) for three days during the week of June 26th. These efforts were part of our ongoing mediation process, mandated by the Railway Labor Act when the parties have been unable to reach a voluntary agreement, and managed by the National Mediation Board.

Despite the CBG’s best efforts to reach a fair agreement with the NCCC, the mediation process took a step backwards on Thursday, June 29th, when the Carriers presented new, onerous bargaining positions. Their new contract demands would have the employees not only paying more per month towards their monthly insurance premiums, but would also make drastic changes in the amount the average employee pays when medical services are needed. Combined with the Carriers’ outlandish demands for this dramatic cost-shifting, they suggested we agree to below-standard General Wage Increases with no retroactivity, and, for certain crafts, harmful work rules changes that would have employees doing more work for less pay in many circumstances.

It is clear from the Carrier’s latest contract demands that they are emboldened by the potential of management-friendly recommendations that could come from a Presidential Emergency Board appointed by President Trump, and ultimately be imposed on the employees by a Congress that already has enacted or is pushing for changes in longstanding labor laws that protect employee rights.

We of course are frustrated by the Carriers’ hard-line attitude. But we will not let this stand in our way. In spite of this latest turn of events, the CBG will not give up its efforts to achieve a voluntary settlement that is fair and protects our members’ best interests. We therefore requested and have been granted additional mediation sessions later this month. This is not by any means the end of the road. The Railway Labor Act makes it the duty of both labor and management “to exert every reasonable effort to make agreements.” We take that obligation seriously. Be assured that we have been working very hard on your behalf and we will continue to pursue every available avenue to achieve a fair contract settlement worthy of your consideration.

The Carrier's latest offer is neither a fair settlement, nor a settlement that we expect our members would ratify. So that you all are fully aware of what has been proposed, and in an effort to bring all affected members up to speed, the Carrier's latest proposal, with a brief synopsis, can be found at

http://www.ble-t.org/.../NCCC_2017-06-29_Synopsis_and_Proposa...

More information will be forthcoming after the mediation sessions scheduled later this month. We appreciate your continuing support.

The Coordinated Bargaining Group is comprised of six unions: the American Train Dispatchers Association; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (a Division of the Rail Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters); the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers; the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers / SEIU; and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers.

Collectively, the CBG unions represent more than 85,000 railroad workers covered by the various organizations' national agreements, and comprise over 58% of the workforce that will be impacted by the outcome of the current bargaining round.



A message from the BLET Mobilization Team