



# Transportation Division News

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International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers

# FACING CORONAVIRUS

## A message to all members and retirees from TD President Jeremy Ferguson

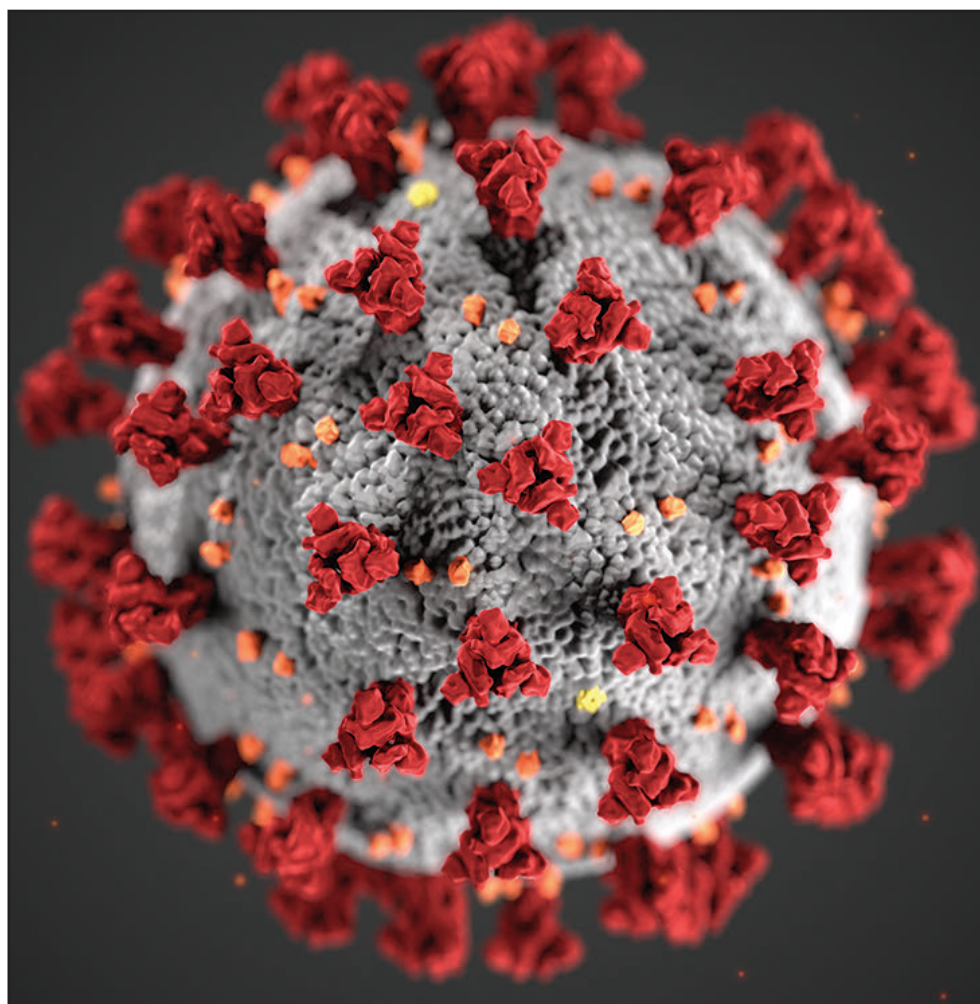
Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I would like to begin by recognizing those of you who, in the face of this global COVID-19 pandemic, are continuing to serve the millions of Americans who depend on us and the services we provide every day.

If not for our bus operators, passenger and transit workers, families without alternate means of transportation might not have access to basic necessities such as food, cleaning supplies and medical attention, while essential staff in urban areas might not be able to report to work. If not for our freight rail crews operating around the clock, many of the vital goods and supplies our communities and healthcare professionals so desperately need and depend on would arrive late, or per-



Ferguson



The structure of a coronavirus is shown in this image from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A novel coronavirus, named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China, in 2019. The illness caused by this virus has been named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

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## Union files petitions seeking protections; FRA quick to grant Class I safety waivers

SMART Transportation Division President **Jeremy R. Ferguson** petitioned four federal agencies in late March seeking assistance in making carriers of all types in the transportation industry comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines in disinfecting work areas and other measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The petitions sought emergency standards encompassing work area sanitation, personal protective equipment and how to deal with workers or passengers expressing symptoms of COVID-19, among other protections.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); Federal Railroad Administration (FRA); Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), as of press time, had not responded to the petitions.

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## Members take initiative to achieve a safer working environment

As COVID-19 has spread across America, some carriers and businesses have been caught flat-footed by the pandemic as indicated by field reports we've received from members.

The same cannot be said for front-line SMART Transportation Division members who

have sprung into action to help their communities and fellow members cope with the effects of the coronavirus.

General Chairperson **Justin Wolters** (GCA-449) was able to engineer an agreement with a local distillery that provided alcohol-based hand sanitizer to members free of charge.

"I explained our travel ban exemption and our lack of access to running water," Wolters said. "They seemed more than happy to help our union."

"I decided I can't rely on the carrier to protect the members, so our officers are donating

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Member Mike Speier of Local 6 poses with his daughters with some of the bottles of bleach water he's been supplying to co-workers at the Avon, Ind., yard.

### Inside this issue of the SMART TD News

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# Pandemic affects union gatherings and meetings going forward

SMART Transportation Division State Legislative Boards that have not yet conducted their quadrennial reorganization meetings are directed to cancel their meetings and conduct elections by mail ballot.

Taking these steps will assist in meeting the recommendations of the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to stem the trans-

mission of the COVID-19 virus by avoiding unnecessary travel and exposure to gatherings of people.

According to SMART Constitution Article 21B, Section 93, lines 18-22:

*"Beginning in 1972 the Chairperson of each State and District Legislative Board shall convene the full Legislative Board not later than May 31st following the completion of the quadrennial elections*

*for Local Legislative Representatives for reorganizational purposes, which shall include the election of officers and adoption of bylaws and procedures."*

As a result of the growing adverse impact of the COVID-19 virus, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS), on March 17, 2020, issued guidance that provides this organization

with latitude regarding the deadline for accomplishing the quadrennial reorganization, but still requires making "a good faith effort to conduct officer elections within LMR-DA [Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act] timeframes."

Accordingly, the quadrennial elections of your board should be conducted as soon as possible, and completed before the constitutionally

mandated May 31, 2020, deadline.

The DOL has advised that nominations can be taken by email, but elections must be conducted by secret ballot. The elections should be conducted pursuant to the procedures found in SMART Constitution Article 21B, Section 57, which calls for the use of "A" envelopes and the employment of three tellers to

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## Around the SMART TD

### Local 204, Pueblo, Colo.



**Charlie Skidmore**, assistant state legislative director of Colorado and the local's legislative representative, crossed the border into Nevada in late February to join with SMART General President **Joseph Sellers** and General Secretary-Treasurer **Joe Powell** as they and other SMART officers toured the under-construction home of the future Las Vegas Raiders. Skidmore, also a UTUIA field supervisor, got to see materials that were hauled in to the site by TD railroad members being assembled, creating a brand-new stadium that will be his favorite team's new home for a number of NFL seasons to come.

### Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.

Officers and members want to wish all of the following members who have recently retired many long years of happiness!

**Robert D. Webb**, who served as the local's president and vice president for 12 years, hired out with Southern Pacific on May 30, 1970, as a brakeman and was promoted to conductor April 12, 1972. He continued working through the merger with Union Pacific on Sept. 16, 1996, before retiring after 51 years of service.

**Dale M. Biggs** served as secretary and treasurer of Local 240 for 12 years. He hired out with Southern

Pacific Aug. 5, 1977, as a brakeman and was promoted to conductor April 12, 1980. He worked through the merger with Union Pacific as well and retired Dec. 2, 2018, after 42 years' service.

**James P. Jones**, the California state legislative director and assistant state legislative director over 30 years, also served as local chairperson and legislative representative of Local 1336 for 12 years. He hired out as a brakeman with Pacific Electric Railroad, which later merged with the Southern Pacific, and was promoted to conductor Jan. 28, 1970. He worked

through the UP merger and retired Dec. 18, 2019, after 59 years of service.

**Harry J. Garvin Jr.**, the local chairperson and legislative representative of Local 240 for 28 years, also served as a local delegate. He hired out as a brakeman with Southern Pacific Nov. 25, 1972, and was promoted to conductor April 15, 1977, before working through the UP merger. After 48 years of service, he retired Jan. 1, 2020.

**Ray C. Salcido**, a conductor and brakeman, hired out with Union Pacific in 1998 and also retired on Jan. 1, 2020, after 22 years of service.

## Two members lose children in untimely tragedies

Two SMART Transportation Division members and their local union brothers and sisters are in mourning after two sudden and untimely deaths.

Local 1565 member **Laura Corley** lost her son, Joey Trianders Allen, 43, of Lancaster, Calif., after police said a wrong-way driver slammed into his vehicle on the 405 Freeway in Los Angeles early Sunday, Feb. 16.

The driver suspected of being drunk behind the wheel in the crash that killed Allen has been charged with murder and a number of other counts associated with the crash. Services for Allen took place March 7

In Michigan, the family of Grand Elk Railroad employee and SMART-TD Local 313 Local Chairperson **Todd Vaughn** is mourning the death of Vaughn's daughter, Alison Sargent, 25.

The body of Sargent, the mother of two daughters from Pennfield Township, Mich., was found Saturday, March 7, after she had been reported missing March 5.

No suspects have been identified in Sargent's death, and police are continuing to investigate her death as a homicide.

SMART-TD expresses its deepest sympathies to both Sister Corley and Brother Vaughn in this time of unimaginable loss to them and to their families.



Allen



Sargent

### Local 854, Portsmouth, Va.



Virginia State Legislative Director Ronnie Hobbs and members with their wives dressed up to support the local CASA group's third annual benefit masquerade ball.



Ferguson: Union is fighting for the protection of members as nation faces coronavirus pandemic

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haps not at all.

It is impossible to overstate the fact that your dedication, professionalism, and skills support the very backbone of our country during this moment of crisis. Not only do we feel a duty to provide for ourselves and our loved ones through this difficult and uncertain time, but we are bound by our moral obligation to provide essential goods and services that our nation must have to endure, and later recover, from this ordeal.

Unfortunately, we have already received confirmed reports that some of our members have tested positive for COVID-19. Our thoughts and prayers are with those members, and their loved ones, who have either tested positive or are in quarantine. If you or someone you know is having difficulty dealing with the stress or anxiety brought on by this virus, we want you to know that Optum has established a no-cost, 24/7, emotional support help line at 1-866-342-6892. Please share this information accordingly.

It is unconscionable that in the wake of a national emergency, some of our carriers have refused to suspend draconian attendance policies that compel us to report for

duty when we, or members of our household, are symptomatic. Many of those same carriers are neglecting to provide the proper cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and workplace sterilization that would undoubtedly save lives. Their actions, or lack thereof, are reminiscent of the railroad companies' safety policies of more than a century ago, where they viewed such matters as the workers' responsibility to fend for themselves, and they made the bare minimum effort by issuing stern, authoritarian warnings. We firmly believe history will not look kindly on these carriers. The good news is a few carriers are actually leading the way and setting the bar at "unbelievable levels," as reported by Long Island Rail Road General Chairperson **Anthony Simon**. We hope others will soon follow.

As a result of the above, and in correspondence reported about elsewhere in this newspaper, we have turned to our lawmakers and regulatory agencies with authority to mandate the workplace protections we so desperately expect and deserve. In his letter dated March 11, 2020, Ronald Batory, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, claims that, "*FRA has*

*been monitoring this issue closely and confers regularly on its impacts with railroad service providers...."* [emphasis added]. Further, Mr. Batory advised that... "[t]he Administration has taken a whole-of-government approach which has paved the way for a whole-of-America response...." If you find this response as abhorrent as we do, then perhaps you may join us in seeking further clarification from Mr. Batory by calling his office at (202) 493-6014.

On March 18, we made similar demands on behalf of our bus members in a letter addressed to Raymond P. Martinez, Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. While we had yet to receive a response from Mr. Martinez as of press time, it may help if we call his office at (202) 366-4000 and voice our concerns.

Our National Legislative Department, in conjunction with the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO and other rail labor Organizations, have been on Capitol Hill relentlessly demanding many of these same protections. Through this conduit, we are doing everything we can to ensure that Congress will not overlook the rail industry and its employees when legislation is introduced

to provide relief to those affected by COVID-19. Likewise, our general committees of adjustment and state legislative boards have been working tirelessly to apply similar pressure to individual carriers, state and local lawmakers and regulatory agencies.

To assist our Legislative Department and general committees in their efforts, we strongly encourage you to reach out to your representatives. It is more important than ever to draw their attention to the fact that our employers and policymakers are relinquishing their duties to act as responsible corporate citizens and government agencies. If you are not already aware, you may find your representatives' contact information by simply entering your address and zip code in the "Find Your Elected Officials" field at the bottom of the following webpage: [https://www.congressweb.com/SMART\\_Transportation/takeaction/#](https://www.congressweb.com/SMART_Transportation/takeaction/#)

In addition to those efforts, we have participated in numerous conference calls and meetings to directly address and escalate these matters with members of management, Congress and regulatory authorities. As you might imagine, the discourse

in some of these conversations would not be appropriate for sharing verbatim. Nonetheless, you should rest assured they know exactly where we stand and what we expect.

Now more than ever, I am honored and humbled to serve as your President. I have an immense sense of pride and respect for all of you who continue to place yourselves in harm's way, doing what many are not capable of doing. Please accept this letter as my personal commitment that your union will not cease or slow its efforts until we procure the workplace safety and security we deserve.

As things develop, we will be posting updates to our website and social media pages and sending email communications directly to those of you who subscribe.

With optimism that our collective perseverance and courage will guide us through this trying time, and with my sincerest gratitude for your continued support, I remain  
Fraternally yours,

Jeremy R. Ferguson  
President,  
Transportation Division

Members pull together to assist one another in creating a safer work environment during pandemic

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cleaning materials daily and cleaning when they can."

Attention to sanitation of work areas also has been a challenge that General Chairperson **Larry Miller** (GO 386) is doing his best to help meet by providing disinfecting wipes to workers in packages provided by the union.

"I wanted to do all I can on my part to keep our members supplied with whatever I could get at our local stores," said Miller, who was elected an alternate vice president at last year's Second SMART-TD Convention. "I know it is not a lot, but it does make a dent. If we all pull together as the SMART-TD team, we will get through this."

Member **Mike Speier** of Local 6 (Indianapolis, Ind.) purchased a number of spray bottles from the dollar store, mixing up a bleach solution with four gallons that he purchased on his own, and then placing the filled spray bottles around the yard office.

"They can put posters up (until) the cows come home, but that's not keeping us safe," Speier said. "It's cheap to do, I followed the instructions on Google and have been filling them up and giving them to the guys."

"If I keep my brothers and sisters safe and healthy, it ensures that I come home safe and healthy."

If managers would give workers a bit of extra time to sanitize and disinfect their worksites — about 10 minutes — and allow the people to pull together, it'd help to reduce the risk of the coronavirus spreading, he said.

"You have a half-dozen guys buy bottles and bleach water, and we can really nip this in the bud," Speier said.

Some members are doing their best to keep others informed.

On the West Coast, General Chairperson **James Sandoval** of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and Local 23 (Santa Cruz, Calif.) has been spreading information during the out-

break.

In particular he is raising awareness about federal and state benefits that are available especially for those who may find themselves unable to work because they or someone they care for is dealing with COVID-19.

"Since we are in uncharted waters with this pandemic, it is extremely important to support each other and share information that may help because there is no book on this," he said. "We must step up to make sure nobody feels alone right now because things are changing at a rapid pace."

Sandoval says that a cooperative effort has brought about shift adjustments at both Santa Cruz's bus and paratransit properties by the carrier, which also has eliminated disciplinary procedures on sick calls, begun a no-question 10-day stay-at-home policy, supplied personal protective equipment and implemented bus sanitization practices.

"I couldn't have accomplished improving our workplace strategy around COVID-19 to help protect our members without the support of my great team at our local. I have always believed that working together means we can get through anything — we will come out of this stronger than ever!"

**Johnny Walker**, legislative representative for Local 610 and secretary of the Maryland State Legislative Board, has been using his experience in the military and as a railroader to help pull people in his neighborhood and at his workplace together to cope with the stresses posed by the pandemic.

Walker wrote a guest column (see Page 9) talking about how members will be essential in guiding the country through this challenge.

New Jersey State Legislative Director **Ron Sabol** also has been working closely with the state AFL-CIO to distribute information

to members, especially members employed by New Jersey Transit, which has been particularly hard-hit.

He praised the efforts of General Chairperson **Jerome Johnson** (New Jersey Transit conductors) of Local 60 in Newark, as doing an exemplary job in keeping things moving in this time of crisis, as are other NJT members.

"He has been doing everything he possibly can to protect his members and the riding public. After all, NJT operates in and out of New York City," Sabol said. "Our N.J. bus members as well have been dealing with fuller buses because of route cuts."

These and other members efforts that haven't yet been reported to us at [news-TD@smart-union.org](mailto:news-TD@smart-union.org), are what's going to keep the country moving and our fellow brothers and sisters healthy as we all work through the challenge of this pandemic.



SMART GENERAL PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Union with you in crisis as others cast safety aside

Brothers and Sisters,  
SMART families are facing a threat from a deadly and contagious virus putting our livelihoods and our world economy at risk both in the short term and long term. I hope that we as a country and individually listen to the science and medical professionals, as the virus is carried across our nation. The cavalier attitude of our country's leadership has extended the height and length of the curve, which now moves the risk to more neighborhoods.

Please take a moment and reflect thanks and gratitude to essential workers, our health care workers and first responders who sacrifice themselves and their families every day to care for us. It is unfortunate that government left them with-



By Joseph Sellers Jr.

out the protective and life-sustaining equipment to combat the virus. Thank you to many of our members from every sector, who are essential and on the frontlines, which includes sacrifices from their families.

Please join me in dedicating all our efforts to fight this pandemic and reduce the spread, to use the CDC guidelines at home and in the workplace. Your loved ones and co-workers are counting on it. Take the time to check in on any family or co-workers who may have

underlying health conditions, as well as retired and alumni members who right now are among some of the most-vulnerable populations and need our support. If there is an immediate need, check your union resources. Much of this is located at [smart-union.org](http://smart-union.org) as well as [SMO-HIT.org](http://SMO-HIT.org), which contains up-to-date health and safety information that is applicable to every member of SMART.

Meanwhile, many of you continue to work every day. Moving freight and passengers is a contribution that's maintaining our nation's economy. America's transportation systems are essential for not only our survival, but the world's economy and vital supply chains.

Your SMART leadership continues to address the

wide array of issues in the best interest of you, our members. It is unfortunate that there are those who would take advantage of these uncertain and dangerous times. On March 25, 2020, the FRA granted safety waivers as presented by AAR, ASLRRRA and APTA. It appears that the sponsors took advantage of a favorable political environment at the expense of railroad and transportation employees.

At the same time, we also recognize that many carriers have done an outstanding job working with our general chairpersons. These carriers did not run to the DOT/FRA for relief that could not be achieved through negotiations. Instead, they put their workers first, met with the unions and provided resources and comfort for

our members and their families. As for the freight carriers, their appetite for profit ahead of safety is once again a matter of record. What is more distasteful is how they bypassed labor and moved their agenda through an administration that chose their interests over the health and safety of workers.

As we see and hear daily, the CDC has offered guidelines to stop the spread of coronavirus, yet some freight carriers will not provide simple maintenance or a disinfectant process for facilities and equipment for operating employees. So once again, we must step up to the principles of solidarity and rely on ourselves. Our TD Legislative Depart-

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Bus Department News

A message from your Bus Department leadership

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
We are making strides in the Bus Department on the issues that were strongly discussed at the Bus and Transit committee that was a part of the convention.

The international has put its team of organizers together and is ready to grow the Bus Department and, more importantly, to grow our union to make us bigger and stronger. SMART-TD President **Jeremy Ferguson** has made a commitment to provide the resources so that we are successful.

Another issue that needs immediate attention is the coronavirus, while anyone can contract it, make no mistake that we are more susceptible to this than anyone other than maybe health professionals who are treating patients. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by coronavirus. Some symptoms are fever, fatigue and dry coughing, early studies suggest that it affects older adults more so than younger adults.

Some things we can do to try and protect ourselves is regularly wash



Studivant

our hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Try to stay at least six feet from someone who is coughing and try to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please check with medical professionals immediately.

I would be interested to know what your company or transit agency is doing to help combat what we are facing on a daily basis, so please email me at [cstudivant@smart-union.org](mailto:cstudivant@smart-union.org) and let me know what they are doing.

Another issue we continue to face is operator assault.

On Jan. 24, operator **Cecilia Mejia** of Local 710 in Newark, N.J., was assaulted while operating her bus. Sister Mejia is a 19.5year employee with Coach USA, who operates the service.

I would like to extend a big thank-you to **Katesha Hollman**, general chairperson of Local 710, New Jersey State Legislative Director **Ron Sabol**, Jim Rutherford, the general manager

of Coach USA in Elizabeth N.J., and also safety manager Guillermo Maldonado. Those four individuals continuously hounded the Newark Police Department and provided them with video footage of the assault and worked tirelessly to get justice for their employee and our member.

It pleases me to announce that a suspect in the assault was apprehended just five days after.

This bus, like all Coach USA buses, was equipped with a safety partition, but the suspect reached around and struck sister Mejia. Our union sister did not suffer major injuries but did have minor contusions due to her glasses.

In New Jersey, there is a seven-year mandatory jail sentence for assaulting a transit worker. Let us hope that the courts now do their job.

In closing, I once again urge you all to be safe and remain vigilant.

I remain, fraternally,  
**Calvin Studivant**  
VP Bus Department  
SMART-TD  
216-630-0963

Social Security offices closed due to COVID-19

All local Social Security offices were closed to the public for in-person service starting March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve — older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions — and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

Online services remain available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the phone.

A notice will be issued when these offices are reopened to the public for regular service.

**Correction:**  
Cameron Johansen was misidentified as Wade Wilde in a photo caption that appeared in last issue's State Watch.

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TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

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## TRANSPORTATION DIVISION PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## This round, TD and BLET will act in solidarity

Sometimes it takes something major to happen for people to sit up and take notice. A wake-up call, if you will.

From the standpoint of our national contract negotiations, our union got another wake-up call even before our first session.

On February 11th, a U.S. district judge, who was appointed by President Donald Trump last year, ruled against our union in a lawsuit over crew-consist moratoriums. We're now appealing that decision.

The court ignored the Railway Labor Act strictures with regard to the moratorium provisions which have been upheld for decades. We are being pushed down the tracks where the carriers want this to go.

This fight is not over, and we have another that is about to begin.

There's a lyric that Anne Feeney wrote that gets at the heart of this matter and that unions have embraced: "United, we bargain. Divided, we beg."

We now have a coalition



By **Jeremy Ferguson**

of 10 rail unions negotiating together in this upcoming round of bargaining. I have been in close contact with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) President Dennis Pierce throughout as carriers have tried to attack two-person crews.

Our two unions are linked in the courts. We're linked in the halls of Congress. We're linked in the locomotive cabs. We are now linked at the bargaining table.

Our attorneys are working together on behalf of both our organizations to fight the ongoing court cases as carriers try to manipulate the system with their deep pockets by attempting to get long-standing precedents and legislation overturned.

Legislative representatives from both our organizations are meeting with members

of Congress and state legislatures to get the word out for two-person crew laws. The carriers, however, are using every means they have to try to get two-person crew laws of seven states thrown out, which we have opposed.

Members from both organizations are sitting in cabs of freight trains staying alert and keeping one another safe through each and every shift, ready at a moment's notice to respond when things go wrong. We need to carry this effort on in crew consist.

BLET President Pierce recently stated in a message to his union:

"I share this information to make it clear to BLET's membership that our proud Union stands with our Brothers and Sisters in SMART's Transportation Division in the fight to preserve two-person crews," Pierce wrote. "Be it on the regulatory front, the legislative front, in court or at the bargaining table, BLET is working with SMART-TD to protect the interests of all operating

**"Any attempt to drive a wedge between our organizations in order to get officers and members alike to disregard the goal at hand — preserving two on the operating crew — plays into the carriers' hands. It gets them closer to what they want."**

employees."

I, as President of the SMART-TD, want to make it clear to our union that we stand united with the BLET.

Any attempt to drive a wedge between our organizations in order to get officers and members alike to disregard the goal at hand — preserving two on the operating crew — plays into the carriers' hands. It gets them closer to what they want: Fewer workers, more money in their pockets, a less-safe (cheaper) work environment and weakens all of rail labor. Two unions with members and with leadership going in opposite directions would make it easier for carriers to accomplish their goal of eradicating jobs in favor of their idea of "innovation."

I also agree with President Pierce when he stated:

"The bottom line is this: In

order to preserve two-person crews, each union must protect and preserve its member of those crews. With only a few exceptions, BLET cannot bargain nationally for conductors. The same is true in reverse; with only a few exceptions, SMART-TD cannot bargain nationally for engineers," he wrote. "For these reasons, and regardless of the fear-mongering going on, BLET cannot 'sell' Conductor positions to benefit Engineers in national negotiations, and the same is true in reverse for SMART-TD. Again, each Union must protect its half of our two-person crews for all operating employees to prevail."

Brothers and sisters, this is an uneasy time for every member of every labor organization involved in

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## State Watch

## News from SMART TD State Legislative Boards

## Washington's 'zombie' two-person crew bill made law

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed into law H.B. 1841, a two-person crew bill that was championed in various forms for seven years by SMART-TD Washington

State Legislative Director **Herb Krohn** and the other members of the state's legislative board.

Affectionately known as a "zombie" bill — H.B. 1841 had been buried and put on



Krohn

hold numerous times by legislators but kept coming back in the face of carrier opposition — it ultimately became the law of the land March 27.

"We were able to finally prevail by building a cohesive coalition of supporters including police and fire departments, environmental organizations, other labor unions, and interested community organiza-

tions to advance this bill across the finish line," Krohn said. "We not only finally prevailed in our statehouse, we've successfully passed the STRONGEST state train crewing law in the entire nation!"

As written, the bill allows the state Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to "order railroad carriers to increase the number of railroad employees in areas of increased risk to the public, passengers, railroad employees, or the environment, or on specific trains, routes, or to switch assignments on their road with additional numbers of crewmembers, and may direct the placement of additional crewmembers, if it is determined that such an increase in staffing or the placement of additional crewmembers is necessary to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public, passengers, or railroad employees, to prevent

harm to the environment or to address site-specific safety or security hazards."

The bill survived a last-ditch effort by Senate Minority Leader Mark Schoesler on March 6 to quash it before it passed through the state Senate by a 34-15 vote.

Schoesler, a Republican, attempted to adjourn the legislative session rather than have the bill come up to a vote five minutes before the close of the legislative session, Krohn said.

"Schoesler attempted to shut down the Washington State Senate rather than allow our crewing bill to come to the floor for consideration and a vote," Krohn said. "It's an example of just how far the rail carriers and their allies are willing to go to kill off our safe train crewing bill as well as any other railroad safety legislation they oppose!"

That motion to adjourn was defeated by a party-

line vote, and the bill subsequently was heard and voted upon.

Five Republicans and a Democrat who caucuses with them voted with every Senate Democrat in favor of the bill. The 15 senators who voted against H.B. 1841 were all Republican.

Krohn said the law is scheduled to take effect Thursday, June 11, 2020, and restores minimum freight crew legislation in the state that had been removed from the books in 1966 thanks to carrier lobbying efforts.

At the federal level, Washington state is a party along with three other states and rail labor unions in the U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit lawsuit against the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) attempt to prevent states from passing laws mandating train crew size.

A hearing in that lawsuit is likely to be held in late summer or fall.

## New state legislative directors

A number of changes have happened at the top of state legislative boards due to reorganizing.

- **California:** **Louis Costa** (Local 1241), succeeds **Mike Anderson**, who has retired.
- **Iowa:** **Chris Smith** (Local 17), succeeds **Jonathan Todhunter**.
- **Michigan:** **Donald Roach** (Local 1760) succeeds **Jerry Gibson** (Local 313), who now serves in the TD President's Office as chief of staff.
- **Montana:** **A.E. Drew** (Local 544) succeeds **Robert R. Teskey**.
- **Oklahoma:** **Kyle Pense** (Local 1289) succeeds **Dennis C. Scholle**.



# TWO MADE A DIFFERENCE

## Wandering girl, 5, rescued from snow in Minnesota

The efforts of a two-person crew in East St. Paul, Minn., helped to save a wandering five-year-old girl and reunite her with her family.

Near midnight Saturday, Feb. 1, SMART Transportation Division Local 1293 member **Jarrold Campbell** and BLET member Angela Knutson were operating a Union Pacific train through East St. Paul when they spotted something unusual alongside the tracks.

The shape looked strange to them, so Knutson stopped the train, and Campbell grabbed his lantern and left the cab to investigate.

Walking back, he discovered a five-year-old girl wearing a light jacket. She wasn't wearing a hat or mittens and her sneakers were filled with snow.

"I introduced myself to her," Campbell said. "She said that her name was Zoey and that she was cold and wanted her mom."

The conductor out of the Altoona, Wis., local picked Zoey up and asked her if she would want to come into the locomotive where it was warm so she could meet Angela.

There are more instances out there like these that have not yet been told. As the carriers continue to make their argument that the conductor's role in the cab is superfluous and replaceable by technology, we need to prove that this is simply not true. If you are a railroader and you have a story to tell when having two on the crew made a difference, please share it with us.

Visit <https://www.smart-union.org/two-person-crew-report> to be heard.



Local 1293 member Jarrold Campbell, a Union Pacific conductor, and BLET member Angela Knutson are interviewed in this screen capture courtesy of Fox 9 KMSF-TV in St. Paul, Minn.

"She gave me a big hug and said thank you," Campbell said.

Campbell carried Zoey through the snow and they went into the cab. There Campbell and Knutson comforted her by wrapping her in Campbell's coat, giving her a spare pair of Knutson's socks, using hand warmers to stave off the early

signs of hypothermia and keeping her calm until EMS crews could arrive.

She had been reported missing to police about 45 minutes to a half-hour before the crew found her, Campbell later learned. The temperature was about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and he said there was

still eight to 10 inches of snow on the ground there.

The combined efforts of both crewmembers saved the girl from a possibly life-threatening situation at a time when rail carriers are looking to cut the conductor position from the cab in favor of technologies such as Positive Train Control. The carriers and Federal Railroad Administration argue that no data exists proving that a two-person crew is any safer than a single-person crew.

Zoey's family would probably differ on that.

"It's just miraculous that we were able to see her or find her," Campbell said. "It sure wasn't Positive Train Control that stopped and saved this girl."

Both Campbell and Knutson told the story of the girl's rescue to the Fox 9 television station in Minneapolis-St. Paul and brought a teddy bear to share with the girl.

"Let her know that we're glad she's doing good," Campbell told reporter Christina Palladino.

## Conductor Jason Schwartz helps to save life of a teen found near rails

The secretary & treasurer of SMART-TD Local 464 (Arkansas City, Kan.) rendered medical assistance to a teen who was found bleeding from a head wound on the side of the tracks in mid-February, saving the boy's life.

**Jason Schwartz**, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom during the battle of Fallujah in November 2003 and a TD member since 2006, described the situation:

"Today I was faced with a decision that ultimately changed the outcome for a 16-year-old kid.

"I was called out of Oklahoma City and took a train north to Arkansas City. At 1705, a southbound Z-train dialed up the emergency tone for DS-21 and advised they may have seen a kid/body on the right of way of the main line, and he looked to be dead.

"I was stopped in the siding meeting the Z-train, and without hesitation I donned my gear and headed to the location where the body was said to be. I took to foot and

walked ... to check on what the Z-train was reporting.

"When I got 30 yards away from the body, I called out, 'Hey boy, hey buddy, I'm here to help!' I didn't know if the person was dead or alive, but I still wanted to announce I was there just in case the person was in a mad state of mind. I got about 10 yards away and saw the kid was still breathing and radioed, 'We need an ambulance asap, he's still alive,' I opened my phone to take a video to show he was alive when I arrived in case he died in between the time I found him and when paramedics arrived.

"I gave the kid my Carhartt coat to reduce the risk of shock and hypothermia and help talk to the kid to keep him conscious. The kid had a major blow to the center of his forehead where it appeared he went headfirst into the spike and rail, maybe causing a skull fracture, and mangled his face up pretty bad.

"He lost lots of blood but was conscious to answer a few questions," Schwartz

said. "It was hard to make out what he was saying due to the blood coming from a 1.5-inch gash in his mouth."

Paramedics arrived and Schwartz helped to bandage the teen's head wound and to carry him out to where the boy would eventually be airlifted to Oklahoma University Medical Center for treatment. A sheriff's deputy reported to management that the actions of Schwartz, who is also his local's legislative representative and GCA-020 secretary, were considered to be life-saving.

"The sheriff deputy told the road foreman that I went 'above and beyond,' but I would have done it for anybody," Schwartz said later in a phone interview.

A big factor was the mindset he gained from his nine years in the Marines — "seek and save" — didn't allow him to be passive when the situation presented itself, Schwartz said. That's why he walked a mile and a half to the site, focused on stopping the boy's bleeding and sacrificed his coat to stave off shock for the victim.

"My Marine Corps instinct was there to get up and help," he said. "If I'm in a position to help, it was just first nature."

Schwartz visited the teen, who apparently had fallen from a train he had jumped on, in the hospital. Schwartz, familiar with the stretch where he found the teen, said the train could have been going as fast as 50 mph. The teen had a broken nose, fractured cheekbone and went through surgery to have a titanium plate inserted to help stabilize his head injuries with additional surgeries slated for jaw and dental repair, Schwartz said.

The conductor later received a letter from the teen's adopted mother and biological sister thanking him for his life-saving aid.

"They were very, very thankful, and let me know that he was doing well," Schwartz said. "This easily could've been the worst-case scenario."

The teen's position close to the tracks where Schwartz found him put him in jeopardy of getting hit by a passing train, and a video



Jason Schwartz tends to an injured teenager suffering from a head injury in this screen capture taken from a video from Schwartz's phone.

of the scene taken by Schwartz shows that the teen collapsed on the ballast.

"For all the thousands in technology, not one penny of it would have detected that person next to the tracks," Schwartz said. "He was inches away from the cattle guard on the leading unit. He could have been struck by the step rungs ... PTC is signal-to-signal. There's nothing there to warn the crew of an object on or near the tracks."



# Regional Meeting registration is now open

The 2020 SMART-TD regional meeting is scheduled for **August 26-28 in Cleveland, Ohio**. The meeting provides a platform for educational training, leadership

growth and a sense of fraternalism and solidarity among members.

As in the past, the regional meeting will run for 2.5 days, ending early in the afternoon of the third day. The evening of the first day has been left unscheduled so you, your family and friends can explore and enjoy the city that has been home base

of SMART-TD and its predecessor unions for decades.

Regional meeting registration and hotel information, as well as links to make hotel reservations online, can be accessed by visiting [www.smart-union.org/td](http://www.smart-union.org/td) and clicking on the “Regional Meeting” link on the right side of the page.

All attending the regional meetings must be registered in order to attend planned social functions. Children ages 11 and under who are pre-registered are complimentary. The registration form is printed on the right of this article, and online registration is available in the “Regional Meeting” section of the TD website.

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds **must be received** at SMART Transportation Division, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333, by **Friday, July 24, 2020**, to be considered pre-registered. The pre-registration fee for the 2020 regional meeting is **\$200 per member, spouse or child over age 11**. An additional fee applies for the tour. You must make your own hotel reservation, and certain deadlines apply. Persons who do not pre-register **will be charged an additional \$50 for late registration**; those choosing to register on-site will be charged an additional **\$100 per attendee. Cash will not be accepted on-site.**

The registration fee covers all workshop materials, a welcome reception the night before the meeting, three lunches and the Tuesday night event. You may cancel your meeting registration 10 days prior to the first day of the meeting without penalty.

Call the Transportation Division at 216-228-9400 immediately regarding changes or cancellations.



**Hilton Cleveland Downtown**  
100 Lakeside Ave. E.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114



## Tour, event finalized for meeting

The tour, a cruise of the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie, is sponsored and hosted by the SMART Transportation Division Auxiliary. Scheduled for Monday afternoon, food will be provided.

Tickets are \$35 for each registered guest, or \$75 for each unregistered guest.

The Tuesday night event takes place at the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum on the Cleveland lakefront where attendees will get the museum all to themselves and a chance to check out the grand assortment of memorabilia. Food and drink are provided.

For more information, visit [www.smart-union.org/td](http://www.smart-union.org/td) and select the “Regional Meetings” link on the right side of the homepage.

## Transportation Division Regional Meeting registration form

Registering before the regional meeting expedites sign-in procedures, helps organizers plan more accurately and saves on meeting costs. **Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any event. Please note that the meeting lasts 2.5 days and concludes on the afternoon of the third day.** Registration fees are \$200 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Registration forms with payment must be received at the Transportation Division by **July 24** for all members, spouses and guests to be considered pre-registered. Late registration after July 24th is \$250 and on-site registration is \$300 per person.

Arrival date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation type: ☐ Automobile ☐ Air ☐ Other

### Member registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Local \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal  
Welcome reception: ☐ Sunday

### Spouse registration

Spouse name \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal  
Welcome reception: ☐ Sunday  
Spouse/guest tour: ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered spouse; \$75/tour per unregistered spouse)

### Child registration

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Child name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Group event ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Welcome reception: ☐ Sunday No. attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Tour: ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered child; \$75/tour per unregistered child) No. attending \_\_\_\_\_

### Guest registration

Guest name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to member \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Day 1 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal Any dietary restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals  
Day 3 ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal

Welcome reception: ☐ Sunday  
Guest tour: ☐ Monday (\$35/tour per registered guest; \$75/tour per unregistered guest)

Special needs? (Circle appropriate responses): Registrant / spouse / child / guest is:  
hearing impaired / visually impaired / in wheelchair / other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment options

Check/money order enclosed (U.S. funds only - NO CASH) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_ Total charged \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to “SMART-TD Regional Meeting” and mail to SMART-TD Regional Meeting, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333. Please do not send cash. When registering online, payment also can be made online. Persons who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but choose to register at the meeting site or after the pre-registration deadlines will be charged an additional \$50. Space on the scheduled tour is limited; reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.



# NLD Gregory Hynes interviewed by *Trains*

In the April edition of *Trains Magazine*, SMART-TD National Legislative Director **Greg Hynes** was interviewed about key issues and industry trends including Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR), two-person crews, autonomous trains and the effect presidential elections have on the railroad industry.



Hynes

Hynes spoke about how PSR is a threat to jobs, the industry and the public because fewer safety inspections are being performed with fewer people. He also said there is a blatant disregard by Class I management toward fatigued and ill individuals who aren't being allowed time off. When asked if

autonomous train technology could come to the U.S., Hynes responded:

"Where they have the autonomous trains out in Australia is on a route that doesn't have any grade crossings, there are no people nearby, and it's basically out in the middle of nowhere. But if you try to do that in the United States, where you have thousands and thousands of grade crossings, it

will be a really bad thing. The people on a train are the first responders in every crossing incident. You won't have that with an autonomous train."

Trains closed the interview asking how the 2020 presidential election will impact railroads and unions. Hynes noted that whoever is in the White House determines who runs the FRA.

"If we see a continuation

of what we have right now, it will not be good for rail safety or labor. This current administration has not been friendly to labor at all. Rail safety is not their primary function anymore, as we saw in their decision to not implement a national crew-size rule. How is that in the best interest of safety? It's all about protecting the railroads' bottom line, but that's not the FRA's job."

## Ferguson: Now is time for union solidarity

*Continued from Page 5*

these negotiations as the carriers continue to cut personnel. The operating craft unions have the buzzsaw of technological threats from the carriers aimed straight down the middle of the locomotive cab. Don't be persuaded by the fearmongering that attempts to divide us.

You are going to hear rumors out there. You are going to hear speculation. You are going to have people beating their chests and criticizing decisions made years ago by prior leaders for putting us in what could be a critical — maybe the most critical — moment in rail labor's history with the in-cab role of the conductor in the balance. Ignore all of that noise. We are moving forward, not backward!

This is not the time for anyone to give in to anxiety or paranoia or "what-if" scenarios. When all SMART-TD members put our names on the dotted line to pledge for membership to this organization, we pledged to fight for each other in solidarity. When elected president of the Transportation Division last August, I took an oath to act in solidarity for the best interest for the organization and for all whom we represent. When I signed our organization on as a member of the 10-union Coordinated Bargaining Coalition, I pledged to bargain in solidarity with those other rail labor

organizations in national talks.

All of us need to be focused on the situation that lies ahead and the decisions to be made for the future of rail labor and the crews who operate freight trains. We need to reinforce our lines of defense and prepare to go on the offense by reaching out to the public and to the media. Instead of wondering "what's the union doing for us?" it's time to get to the local union meetings and get involved. It's time for the spouses to join the SMART-TD Auxiliary and get involved. It's time to up your SMART-TD PAC contributions, then get with your state and U.S. legislators, so they hear your voice this election year. It's time to get involved in the SMART Army. It's time to stand strong!

Brothers and sisters, BLET President Pierce and I are united. We will work in solidarity, together, to keep two on the crew as we bargain. We will work together to keep you informed. We know this issue is too important to our memberships and for the public's and our safety not to.

In solidarity,

**Jeremy R. Ferguson**  
President, Transportation Division

## Sellers: In crisis, union here to support, fight for you

*Continued from Page 4*

ment under the leadership of President Jeremy R. Ferguson will be aggressive and effective. The carrier's attempt to force uncertified crews through the political process will fail. Their reliance on an unreliable-to-faulty PTC system that has not been fully implemented by carriers will fail.

The self-centered relationship between a chaotic White House and the federal agency that is enabling the freight carriers will not succeed to create an unsafe work environment for the transportation industry.

Our union's website has a form that transportation workers can fill out to report where these measures are not being taken. Visit [www.smart-union.org/td](http://www.smart-union.org/td) and click the item about the COVID-19 reporting form under Latest Transportation News.

I want to make this clear. Your

SMART union stands with you and your family. We do not stand with the belief that people are expendable, safety is not an item for compromise, and we serve America's communities not Wall Street.

I hope you and your family are well. If you or a member of your family is having trouble with stress, anxiety or other issues — You Are Not Alone. Please contact the SMOHIT HELPLINE at 877-884-6227 or the Optum support line at 1-866-342-6892.

Thank you and stay safe.  
Faternally,

**Joseph Sellers Jr.**  
General President, SMART

## State Watch continued...



### Washington, D.C.

Members of the D.C. Office and state legislative directors participated on Railroad Day on March 4.

From left are Jeff Mitchell of Kentucky; Ronnie Hobbs of Virginia; Alternate National Legislative Director Jared Cassity; D.C. Office Chief of Staff Jenny Miller; Paul Pokrowka of Pennsylvania; Chris Malley, a Local 830 legislative rep and UTUIA field supervisor; and Ron Sabol of New Jersey. Oregon's Glenn Carey also participated but is not pictured.

### Texas



Members new and incumbent of the Texas State Legislative Board raise their hands as they are sworn in to office by Vice President Chad Adams (left) in late February. Pictured are Adams; Board Chairperson Bobby Bradford (Local 923); State Legislative Director Kamron Saunders (Local 508); Assistant State Legislative Director John Dunn (Local 756); Vice Chairperson Billy Ortagus (489); Vice Chairperson Darrell Barrett (Local 11); and Secretary Bruce Schaaf (Local 331) secretary.

### Virginia



A number of SMART-TD members and other supporters of a state two-person crew bill filled the state House as representatives passed H.B. 440 on Jan. 22. The bill's progress was halted in the state Senate.

### Georgia

State Legislative Director **Matt Campbell** was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to serve on the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism.

Nominated by U.S. Rep. Barry Loudermilk's office, Campbell will assist the state in carrying out national and community service activities; promoting the commission in its leadership role; attending quarterly and committee meetings; and advocating for all national service programs and initiatives.



Campbell



GUEST COLUMN

Local 278 chairperson: What unionism means

By Nick Greficz

“Unionism” is a term used among the likes of “solidarity” and “brother” within the older demographic of members with whom we interact daily. The American Labor Movement is etched into our minds as stories and tall tales are told by previous generations of labor-friendly workers. These men and women have fought, cried, endured unspeakable hardships and flourished in life — all because of their union affiliation. These rights as we know them are under scrutiny



Greficz

more now than ever. Our crafts, working rules and pay rates are all being attacked by the carriers under the guise they need to cut costs to ensure profitability moving into the future. Not every battle is won, but every fight must be fought. We cannot succumb to the corporate tactics of using our human empathy against us. Managers calling employees “brother” and engaging in conversation to determine specific employee weaknesses has to stop. These companies now screen and test for anti-

labor traits and characteristics during the new hire application and interview process. We must keep our sense of solidarity through actions of selflessness to both older and younger union members. I implore all of our members to educate and organize our co-workers. Open your eyes to the attack on our simple way of life. When safe working conditions and prevailing wages are too much to ask for, it’s time to act. Working longer hours to earn the same amount of money is no longer on our agenda. The widening gap on income equality is no longer going to be should-

ered by the working class. Unionism is a belief — a belief that you as a union member should be willing to fight for. It’s easy to sit back and ask, “what is my union doing for me?” and complain. But realize: YOU are the union. YOU are the majority. It’s time you became an active participant in securing a stable future for you and your family. Attend the monthly meetings and get involved. Engage in acts of unionism whether it’s explaining an agreement, talking about a federal regulation or sharing what the union has done for you. Too many of our educated mem-

bers only lean on the union when their job is in jeopardy. You are a union member. Take a moment to self reflect. You want the perks of the union agreements, so actively support the union. I can assure you that SMART wishes you a safe, long, and prosperous career. You are not just another number to the union, you are a MEMBER. Take a stance to ensure you have a future and a prosperous career, not just a job. Nick Greficz is GO 687 secretary and the chairperson of Local 278 in Detroit.

GUEST COLUMN

Union workers’ resilience will help country pull through COVID-19

By Johnny Walker

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to move a lite engine from customer to customer. I like moves like this because they are different from the normal everyday work of a local road switcher. This move was no different from normal railroading, other than this yard bird caught my attention. It was an old U.S. Army EMD SW8 with its original number and livery poking through the faded paint. My father-in-law is U.S.



Walker

Army (retired), a bit of a railfan, and he loves this sort of thing. I wrote down the locomotive’s info. and made the move from plant-to-plant. Long after the train was put to bed and I was home, I decided to do a bit of research on this locomotive wondering if it had ties to my father-in-law’s Army career. To my surprise, I found out this lonely yard bird was a veteran — not just a transportation corps veteran, but a Korean War veteran. This locomotive has been halfway around the world and in a

major conflict and is now retired, shifting coal to provide power to southern Maryland, still doing what it was made to do — railroad-ing. During this health crisis, I look back to my military career as a U.S. Navy Corpsman and also at my current career. Like this yard bird, many railroaders’ paths crossed both in military and railroad service. These two things make us more versatile in the worst of situations, especially in crisis, and more capable to cope with what

Continued on Page 12

COVID-19 affects union gatherings

Continued from Page 2

retrieve the ballots from a P.O. box and tabulate the results. A notice soliciting nominations must be distributed to all Legislative Representatives no less than 10 days prior to the deadline for receipt of nominations. Ballots must be mailed at least 15 days prior to the date of tabulation. Local meetings may be canceled In line with White House recommendations that gatherings of more than 10 people be avoided to counter the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, SMART Transportation Division locals are advised they may cancel monthly meet-

ings in April 2020. During this period only, officers and members seeking membership approval of expense submissions will be able to utilize a relaxed version of a procedure that was previously available only to local chairpersons. In addition, a form is being made available for use by those seeking expense reimbursement. Any officer or member abusing the form and/or submitting fraudulent claims may be subject to removal from office, reprimand, penalties and fines in accordance with the SMART Constitution. Questions on both of these issues should be directed to the TD President’s Office.

Union files petitions seeking worker protections while FRA quick to grant safety waivers to carriers

Continued from Page 1

The president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), Dennis Pierce, co-signed the FRA petition, which was sent March

20 and followed a March 6 joint letter from the unions’ leaders to FRA Administrator Ron Batory seeking FRA action, and the OSHA petition, which was sent March 30. Class I and other freight rail carri-

ers, on the other hand, received a quick turnaround from Batory and FRA on their request for 60-day waivers on safety regulations because of fears of possible pandemic-related worker shortages

Both presidents signed a letter sent to FRA seeking clarification on these waivers, especially since Precision Scheduled Railroading has resulted in a workforce decline unrelated to COVID-19.

Former Bus Department VP Richard Deiser passes away

Richard Deiser, a former Bus Department director and union vice president, died Feb. 28. He was 79 years old. “Rich was a great union brother who will be sorely missed by those who had the pleasure to work with him,” SMART Transportation Division Vice President Calvin Stuidivant said. “We extend our deepest and heartfelt



Deiser

condolences to his wife and kids as well as all his loved ones.” Deiser, of Dumont, N.J., was born July 2, 1940, in Bronx, N.Y. After high school, he joined the U.S. Air Force and served for eight years while also attending the University of Maryland at the same time, taking extension courses. After his discharge from

the service, he worked for many years with Trans World Airlines in the air freight, meteorology and crew scheduling departments. He began his career as a bus operator with Rockland Coaches in 1983. Immediately active in the affairs of his local, Deiser was appointed shop steward in 1985 and elected secretary in 1988. In 1998 he was elected as general chairperson, then was re-elect-

ed three times. He also attained the offices of Local 1558 (Bergenfield, N.J.) delegate and legislative representative. After serving for six years as alternate vice president-bus-East, Deiser was elevated to vice president and director of the Bus Department in July 2009. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 2011. Brother Deiser is survived by his wife of 56 years,

three children, five grandchildren, a great-grandson and a number of brothers and sisters. Donations in Deiser’s memory and in lieu of flowers may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675-8516 SMART Transportation Division expresses its condolences to Brother Deiser’s family, friends and his brothers and sisters of Local 1558.



SMART TD Alumni

News and information for our retirees and members of the SMART TD Alumni Association

Are you getting close to retirement? You can get the TD News & other benefits for just \$9 a year! Call 216-228-9400, email [PR\\_TD@smart-union.org](mailto:PR_TD@smart-union.org) or visit [www.smart-union.org/td/alumni](http://www.smart-union.org/td/alumni)

# Efforts of alumni member and volunteers continue to fund Illinois veterans scholarships

A volunteer effort continues to help veterans in Illinois and their immediate relatives with education expenses by providing scholarships for them and their immediate families.

**Lloyd Holman**, an Alumni Association member and retired SMART-TD Illinois state legislative chairperson, and a group of volunteers contributed a \$10,000 check toward helping to fund veterans education at Richland Community College in Decatur.

The seven or eight volunteers use the training facility of local plumbers and create shepherd's hooks and other ornamental gardening accessories. These are later sold at local markets and



through the University of Illinois co-op.

The effort was first profiled in the April/May 2017 issue of the SMART Transportation Division News and has grown by a lot thanks in part to Holman's leadership.

"I'm pretty good at getting people to do things," he admitted.

Holman is a Macon County board member in addition to his local community activism. Through his steady guidance, the effort has continued to grow with additional donations and additional product designs (from three to 30 by his last count). Materials for the effort are donated by local businesses including the A.E. Staley manufacturing



Pictured from left are retired small business owner Stephen Barnes, Lloyd Holman, retired United Association of Plumbers members Dan Reed, Kenny Hill, Bobby Mundy and Bill Hall as they present a prior donation check for scholarships.

company.

The steady effort of the volunteers, who work three to four hours to keep up with demand, contributes greatly to the program's success, especially since Holman estimates that it would actually take about two to three full days of work on the part of each of the volunteers to keep up with the demand.

"Everybody wants to go on with this effort," Holman said. "You couldn't ask for a better group of guys. It's been a lot of fun."

## Railroad history project turns out to be a winner for granddaughter

Alumni Association Coordinator **Carl Cochran** passed along some news from **Terry Parker**, retired out of Local 1035 (Lake-land, Fla.).

Parker's granddaughter, Zoe, created a project for Polk County

History Fair. "The Railroad that opened Florida" after spending a long weekend visiting several South Florida rail museums for research.

Along with information and original documentation from

Cochran and fellow retiree **Kenny Pirkle**, Zoe's project won a top prize in the senior division.

Zoe, a junior at Bartow International Baccalaureate, is scheduled to show the exhibit in May in a state competition.



## THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of deceased members who were active TD members or maintained annual membership in the SMART TD Alumni Association, according to reports received at SMART TD Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow SMART TD Alumni Association members.

Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State	Local	Name	City/State
1	Wylie, David E.	Colo. Springs, Colo.	483	Yarema, William	Oakville, Ontario	1190	Trujillo, Arturo	Spring Hill, Fla.
44	Turrell, Billy J.	Colby, Kan.	489	Dipprey Jr., Rufus E.	Albuquerque, N.M.	1292	Zacher, William J.	St. Petersburg, Fla.
113	Chadburn, Michael E.	Flagstaff, Ariz.	498	Tusavitz, Daniel J.	Trumbauersville, Pa.	1337	Leonard, Peter J.	New Orleans, La.
212	Pitts, Vernon V.	Ravena, N.Y.	605	Shaw, Harold R.	Moatsville, W.Va.	1366	Morrison, George W.	Sandy, Utah
226	Deweese, Murle G.	Higbee, Mo.	631	Marsh Sr., Stephen W.	Hanover, Md.	1374	Lepore, Robert C.	New Castle, Pa.
243	Dyson, Tommy D.	Decatur, Texas	753	Hopkins Jr., Earl T.	Tunica, Miss.	1381	Craft, James E.	Hot Springs N.P., Ark.
265	Barrett Jr., Cyril L.	Pocatello, Idaho	800	Lehman, Joseph R.	Rahway, N.J.	1393	Beideck, Alton A.	Saranack Lake, N.Y.
322	Greene, Ronald F.	Mosinee, Wis.	807	Powell, John C.	Klamath Falls, Ore.	1393	McMillan, Perry L.	Altoona, Pa.
330	Gorman, Ted L.	Poplar Bluff, Mo.	830	Camplese, Cesidio	Ellenton, Fla.	1421	Gebhardt, Charles E.	Belvidere, Ill.
333	Harden, David L.	Corydon, Ind.	847	Allen, Dillard C.	Columbus, Ga.	1458	Zierhut, Raymond A.	Austin, Ind.
333	Wright, Wendall	Ripley, Ohio	886	Pleau, Earl B.	Negaunee, Mich.	1524	McCoy, Michael Joseph	Washington, Texas
349	Young, Charles H.	St. Joseph, Mo.	1011	Millson, Charles D.	Hamlet, N.C.	1563	Petitt, William H.	Rialto, Calif.
363	Wimmer, Tilton E.	Bent Mountain, Va.	1042	Roberson, James W.	McCloud, Okla.	1823	Harmack, Eugene J.	St. Louis, Mo.
367	Dropinski, Francis E.	Bellevue, Neb.	1043	Thurston, Kenneth D.	Stockton, Calif.	1841	Kawasaki, Wallace A.	Klamath Falls, Ore.
427	Sheppard, Michael A.	Jackson, Miss.	1074	Hoover, James S.	Butler, Pa.	1973	Culver, Robert J.	Wheeling, Ill.
432	Vaught, Manny J.	Port Orange, Fla.	1074	Moag Jr., Robert	Wexford, Pa.	1978	Rohweder, John F.	E. Rutherford, N.J.
471	Wikander, Irving W.	Robert Lee, Texas	1074	Pfister, William G.	Pittsburgh, Pa.			
477	Anderson, L. M.	Denver, Colo.	1168	Kimmel, Elzie	Sawyer, Okla.			



# RRB announces COVID-19 measures, cancellations

From RRB Labor Member John Bragg:  
The purpose of this notice is to update you on how COVID-19 is impacting operations at the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). Be assured, while it is not business as usual, the agency remains open for business. Listed below are some of the more notable changes.

### Field service operations

My office sent a press release to rail labor advising that field offices are closed to the public. Whenever possible, agency personnel, including field personnel, are working from home. Unfortunately, we expect delays with processing incoming work because as you know, much of our work is not automated. We receive applications and claims for both unemploy-

ment and sickness by mail and by fax. Because of safety concerns surrounding COVID-19, staff is only going into the office or to the post office on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### Self-service options

Because of our concern regarding the delay in processing paper applications and claims, we are encouraging railroaders to set up myRRB.gov accounts on the RRB.gov website. Information on the site goes through all the services available through that account. Please feel free to share with your memberships. With that account, an employee can file for and submit claims for unemployment. A railroader can also submit sickness claims, though not the initial application.

Ordinarily, an applicant for

sickness benefits must submit an application form and must also submit Form SI-1b, Statement of Sickness. Because the Form SI-1b requires a doctor's signature and it was recognized that it may be difficult to get a physician to sign a statement during these unique circumstances, the RRB issued guidance indicating that, in lieu of Form SI-1b, a written statement could be submitted for the first claim. Because of the Paperwork Reduction Act and the manner in which federal agencies may collect information, that statement should now be submitted through an RRB Form G-93, Statement of Claimant or Other Person.

### Benefit payments

We have received questions regarding the continuation of retirement and disability

benefits. Fortunately, that is overall an automated process and we do not expect any delays in paying those already established benefits. In addition, our actuary has assured us that the rail trust funds are well-positioned to pay all retirement, survivor, unemployment and sickness benefits. We are actively addressing questions regarding benefits payable under the RUIA and special circumstances raised by COVID-19.

### Legislative changes

Related to legislative changes, the statutory 7-day waiting period for unemployment and sickness benefits has been waived; the amount of unemployment benefits has been increased and other changes have enhanced RRB benefits as a result of legislation signed

into law. There have also been proposals to increase the RRB's administrative budget in order to account for increased costs related to COVID-19. My staff, along with the agency's Office of Legislative Affairs and other agency subject matter experts, are continuing to work with congressional staffers as well as your unions to convey the information needed in order for the legislation to move forward.

### Seminars canceled

Based on the best information currently available and guidance issued by public health officials, the Office of the Labor Member has canceled all Pre-Retirement Seminars scheduled from March through June until further notice.

# General Chairperson Vanwinkle passes away at age 44

General Chairperson **Thomas K. Vanwinkle** (GO 919 — Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA) of St. Louis) unexpectedly passed away February 3, 2020. A career railroader, Brother Vanwinkle worked on TRRA as a trainman from 2003 until present. Prior to working at TRRA, Brother Vanwinkle worked as a trainman on both Union Pacific and Kansas City Southern. He was 44 years old.

Brother Vanwinkle was a longstanding officer of SMART-TD Local 469, serving as legislative repre-

sentative from 2004 until 2019 and local chairperson from 2008 until 2019. In addition, Brother Vanwinkle served as general chairperson of GO 919 from October 1, 2019, until February 3, 2020.

On the subject of Brother Vanwinkle's untimely passing, SMART-TD Vice President **David Wier Jr.** offered the following remarks:

"T.K. was a great man. He was a deeply devoted family man, who unconditionally loved his wife, Kim; his sons, Copelan, Jonathan, and Justin; his daughters,

Dailyn and Kaylee; and his mother, Jeannie," Wier said. "T.K. was a strong-willed union representative, and he always put the best interest of the membership at the forefront. T.K.'s legacy as a strong labor advocate, a dedicated family man and a caring and compassionate person will carry on. He will be sorely missed. T.K.'s tragic passing is both devastating and difficult to comprehend."

SMART-TD offers its sincere condolences to Brother Vanwinkle's family and to all who knew him.



SMART-TD Vice President David Wier Jr., left, offers his congratulations to T.K. Vanwinkle on Sept. 18, 2019, moments after Vanwinkle was elected general chairperson of GO 919.

# Deceased Local 645 retiree remembered fondly in Newsday

**Richard Brzozinski**, 78, was remembered as a compassionate man and model employee of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) in a story by Newsday.

"A veteran Long Island Rail Road conductor on the Babylon line, Brzozinski made a habit of learning the names of all of his regular passengers and their spouses. He'd arrive to work every morning in a freshly pressed uniform. And Brzozinski would always ensure that a seat was saved for his elderly passengers," Robert Brodsky of Newsday wrote.

The story further gives



Brzozinski

accounts of praise from passengers who wrote to MTA about Brzozinski and recounts two separate incidences where Brzozinski was called upon to save passengers' lives with the

use of CPR.

SMART-TD Alternate Vice President **Anthony Simon** is quoted, saying, "Richie was always a professional and always demanded perfection from his co-workers. He wore his uniform impeccably and made sure his crew members did the same. He prioritized the safety and service to our customers, led by example, and received the respect of

everyone he overlapped because of those principles."

Brother Brzozinski began his membership with United Transportation Union Local 645 (Babylon, N.Y.) in August 1961, following in his dad's footsteps as a conductor for the LIRR. He worked for a time with his father John and younger brother Jack (retired LIRR engineer). He retired with 38 years of service in 1999.

Brzozinski died in his home Nov. 19, 2019, after a three-year battle with heart disease. He is survived by his wife Mary; two sons; brother Jack; sisters Joanne, Linda and Sharon; and two grandchildren Jack and Jenna.

### Local 31's Bassmann passes

The life of **Jim Bassmann**, a former local chairperson of Local 31 (San Jose, Calif.) was celebrated at Pajaro Valley Memorial Park in Watsonville. In attendance were many former co-workers, including former SMART-TD President **John Previsich**.

"Jim was a great friend and kept in touch with many of his railroad buddies," said Local Chairperson **Darin Jessup**. "He'll be missed immensely."

Jessup said many retired Local 31 members have passed away recently, including **Mike Kadluboski**, **James Mebane**, **John Jerentina**, **Donald DeWald**, **Ricky Rubottom** and **Eddie Mesa**.

SMART-TD offers its condolences to these members' families and to all who knew them.

### Local 240 mourns members

**Andrew K. Strickland** passed away Jan. 3, 2020. He hired out with Union Pacific in 1998.

**Walter L. Carter** passed away on Jan. 8. He hired out with Southern Pacific in 1972 as a brakeman and retired December 31, 2012, after 41 years of service.

SMART-TD offers its sincere condolences to these members' families and to all who knew them.



Bassmann



## Featured photo showcase

### Have a camera? Get your photo featured on this page

SMART Transportation Division is always looking for good photos and your picture can be featured on this page.

SMART TD seeks photographs or digital images of work-related scenes, such as railroad, bus or mass transit operations, new equipment photos, scenic shots, activities of your local or photos of your brothers and sisters keeping America rolling.

Printed photographs should be mailed to SMART TD, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in JPEG format and emailed to [news\\_td@smart-union.org](mailto:news_td@smart-union.org). We prefer horizontal photos. Be sure that your camera is set to the large resolution setting when taking the photo or it might not reproduce well in print.

With each photograph, please include your name and SMART local number, the names of the persons in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of SMART and can be used in future projects.

Remember to review your employer's policies regarding use of cameras on the property or during work hours.



Indiana State Legislative Director **Kenny Edwards** turned in this photo from the Eugene V. Debs dinner that took place in Terre Haute, Ind., on August 31, 2019. Among the attendees were, from left, retiring National Legislative Director John Risch, Local 744 (Frankfort, Ind.) Legislative Representative Mike Bennett, Edwards, former Alternate National Legislative Director Francis Brewer and his wife, Rose. This was Brother Risch's last day of service.

## Guest column: The resilience of union workers will help country through coronavirus challenge

*Continued from Page 9*

the railroad throws at us.

Because of this, we can set an example to our fellow railroad workers and our community. Our military backgrounds in discipline, self-reliance and basic medical care are literally life-saving. Our railroad skills of planning, job briefings, safety, situational awareness, and being tasked to fix anything so that the job gets done make us adaptable in any situation. Both careers together make us unstoppable, no matter what life throws at us.

Living in the D.C. area for 20-plus years, I am unfazed by major incidents locally. I've been through numerous blizzards, crippling weather and one minor earthquake. Presidential inaugurations, protests and disruptive visits from dignitaries occur frequently. I've lived through the D.C. sniper and September 11th attacks — both instances so close that I had shopped at the Home Depot visited by the snipers and had smelled the Pentagon burning 14 miles away.

In all these events, I was essential personnel — tasked to come in both in a

medical role and as a conductor. Since 1997, I, like many of us, know that when you are called there is no voicemail or marking off. This coronavirus has caused this to happen again, and it's now our time to shine.

This crisis may create panic. However, we have what it takes to get through this. We are prepared for long hours, days away from home, and anything thrown at us. We are also nomads who go where the work is. A lot of us are scattered throughout our divisions and stay at different terminals. We can use this to our advantage. You may be able to find needed items that are in short supply at home, in abundance at other locations. They also might be near the terminals or hotels we lay over in.

As union members we can be ahead of the game with our wide network of resources. Members who are coming to another terminal can get with each other and pool resources. If outlying members can get paper towels and home terminal members can get mac and cheese, trade with each other so both benefit. Schools are closing and lots of our loved

ones are teleworking now. Helping keep our home fronts happy and safe will take a load off while the carriers are working us harder than ever in this national state of emergency. Getting rest is important, and it's going to be potentially harder and more stressful. If you live near a fellow member and can help with childcare or other things, let them know. This too will help with a lot of stresses we have. When laying over if you are able to go out and get supplies, go as a crew so you both can get items if your home needs them and there is a limit to get them. Only get what is needed and don't hoard — this helps no one.

Lastly, if you like hot lunches or get things from the gas station, make sure you're prepared for those possible closures. Bring non-perishable alternatives so you are not stuck without food at work or away from home.

As always, we are a crew, so look out for each other if you can. Most times we are the only ones who look out for us. We must keep this up by showing unity through this crisis and beyond.

Get to know your local community and your neighbors.

They may not know you or your background or even who you are. My neighbors are mostly government workers who only know my odd hours or that I'm the guy who shovels everyone's walk in a bad snowstorm. With social distancing they know that I'm still working to keep our country moving. I've offered to search other stores for provisions that they may need on my way to and from work. Our trash service was delayed, so while having conversations six feet away, I said I was getting in touch with the trash service to plan on an area away from our homes to stage trash if there is a future disruption, remembering my military sanitary training.

As railroaders, we all have this training and these skills. We know when to use them. I had an old timer tell me, "We are not paid for what we do, we are paid for what we know. You must be a proactive conductor, not a reactive conductor."

Now more than ever I understand what he meant. Use your skills and training to better our workplace and community in this crisis. Be prepared, vigilant and safe. Please look out for each oth-

er in this national state of emergency. And absolutely do not put yourself in danger under the guise of a national emergency. We all need to come home the same way we came into work.

With this and all the amazing things I've done over my railroading career. I'm really proud that I can provide service to my country once again even if it's in a small roll like this. This is an amazing time to be a railroader both in great moments and in hardships. We are the nation's backbone in transportation. We ship more freight in a day than a trucker does in a lifetime. And for over 150 years we have been supplying this nation with its needs.

Through two world wars, the 1918 flu pandemic and numerous other hardships, railroaders have come through. We will not let our nation or each other down.

Be safe, brothers and sisters. We will overcome this. Nothing stops a determined union member.

*Johnny R. Walker is secretary of the Maryland State Legislative Board and the legislative representative of Local 610 (Baltimore, Maryland).*