

Building the Movement for Coordinated Bargaining

Since this concept has broad support among working railroaders, it is up to us to make our voices heard. RWU has been a voice for coordinated bargaining since our founding in 2008. Below are some ways that you and your union local can get involved in the campaign to usher in a new and powerful means of bargaining:

- Sign the petition calling on all rail labor unions to unite in bargaining.
- Circulate the petition among your co-workers at work and at your union meeting.
- Pass a resolution of support for coordinated bargaining at your local meeting and forward it to your international union.
- Distribute literature, posters and other materials at work.
- Talk to your co-workers about solidarity and the need to bargain as a group.
- Talk to union brothers and sisters of other crafts, get to know one another and talk about sticking together throughout this next round of bargaining, due to commence in 2024!

Sign me up as a Member of Railroad Workers United

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Post Code _____

Country _____ Email _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Union _____ Local # _____

Railroad _____ Craft _____

Work Terminal _____ Year of Service _____

Position(s) held in your union (if any) _____

I am a (check one): RR Employee RR Retiree RR Family Member Other _____

Please check to affirm this statement: "I am not a manager/officer of a railroad."

Mail this form together with at least one year's due (\$50.00) to:
 Railroad Workers United
 P.O. Box 2131
 Reno, NV 89505

Or apply and pay dues online at www.railroadworkersunited.org

Coordinated Contract Bargaining of All Rail Unions

A Plan for Rail Labor Unity & Power



Railroad Workers United
www.railroadworkersunited.org
info@railroadworkersunited.org
 202-798-3327

United We Bargain – Divided We Beg!

For nearly 150 years rail labor has been divided into a myriad of craft unions. At one time, 26 different unions represented workers on the railroads of the U.S. alone! Through mergers and craft obsolescence, this number has been now reduced to the current 13 or so. The history of this cumbersome, bureaucratic and divisive quagmire of rail labor is one of ineffectual bargaining at best and sell-outs, back-stabbing, and outright scabbing at worst. The failure of rail labor to stick together and to build a common strategy and a common platform has historically been one of the greatest impediments to railroad workers achieving their goals.

Things got interesting this most recent round of bargaining which came to a dramatic close in Fall of 2022. While many unions – the majority – bargained as a group, and ultimately all rail unions party to the national freight agreement were lumped in together for the purposes of the Presidential Emergency Board (PEB #250), the coalition shattered when unity was needed the most. Instead of standing together in the face of a PEB that addressed practically no quality of work life issues, the various craft unions each went their own way in a confusing patchwork of YES and NO, of re-votes, discombobulation and divisiveness. While the rail carriers stood fast against any compromise, the myriad unions were in a quandary of disharmony and chaos.

No Union/Craft Settles Until ALL Settle!

In this last round of contract bargaining that ended in 2022, an unprecedented 10 unions opted to bargain as a group. While this was a big step in the right direction when compared to previous rounds, two unions were not party to the coalition, one of them (BMWED) being one of the largest. Whatever the case, it was all for nought, as the unions scattered like flies once the PEB was released in late summer, with some unions rushing to settle quickly on the terms of the PEB, while others held out on for a little more due to rank & file pressure. There was NO attempts to hold the coalition together when unity and solidarity was needed the most. In fact, rail union officials stated publicly that each union leadership was free to chart their own course at that point! What rail labor needs of course, is an ironclad agreement signed by all unions officials that “no union or craft settles until ALL settle.” Otherwise the coalition is just so much window dressing, lacking in principle and strength.

Obstacles to Coordinated Bargaining

While most rank-and-filers and many union leaders agree that coordinated bargaining makes sense, there are many obstacles to achieving this lofty goal, including:

- Desire on the part of some union leaders to protect their own fiefdom.
- Lack of imagination and a conservative belief that nothing new is possible.
- Long standing hostilities and distrust among some unions based upon past bargaining and other divisive experiences.
- Some union leaders who feel the best way to bargain is to curry favor with the carrier, be the first to settle, to never risk a Presidential Emergency Board, offer the carrier a good deal, etc.



Railroad Workers United (RWU) has produced various buttons, stickers, and posters over the years to raise awareness of our Campaign for Coordinated Contract Bargaining of All Rail Craft Unions. These items and more are for sale at the RWU online Store <https://railworkersunited.storenvy.com/>