



Railroad Workers United

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The Rank & File in Action!

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RWU Resolution in Support of a Paid Holiday for All Railroaders on MLK Day

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Whereas, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a chief spokesperson for the unrelenting, heroic activism of the Civil Rights Movement which successfully protested racial discrimination, overturned legal segregation, and won passage of the historic Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Acts which transformed the United States in the interests of all working people; and

Whereas, The Civil Rights struggle - a grass-roots movement based in the Black working class - was propelled forward by trade unionists, exemplified by such leaders as E.D. Nixon and A. Philip Randolph, both veteran leaders of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP); and

Whereas, E.D. Nixon was the head of BSCP in Montgomery, Alabama (whose Secretary was Rosa Parks) where he recruited Dr. King to be the movement's public spokesperson; while Randolph - the BSCP President - was the honorary leader of the historic 1963 March on Washington for "Jobs and Freedom" that propelled Dr. King to prominence; and

Whereas by 2000, all states had adopted MLK Day as a state holiday, as have several industries and corporations; and

Whereas the rail industry has completely ignored the holiday and has refused to grant any of its workers time off or overtime in lieu thereof on MLK Day; and

Whereas the rail industry has had a long and shameful history of segregation and racist discrimination against Blacks and other minorities, while most rail unions failed to object or were complicit in the segregationist policies of the carriers; and

Whereas, the struggle to achieve a paid holiday for all railroad workers on MLK Day could act as a unifying catalyst for all crafts and all unions to galvanize around and build a unified movement in the upcoming round of bargaining; and

Whereas, the unions could all easily include this demand in the upcoming exchange of Section 6 Notices with the National Carriers Conference Committee this fall, a demand that should easily be supported by all rail unions; and

Whereas, the rail carriers need to be called out on this issue, and the demand be squarely placed - without bargaining away anything in exchange - as this is a moral issue that the carriers should concede to without a fight and without compromise;

Therefore, be it Resolved that Railroad Workers United (RWU) mount a campaign to make MLK Day an official holiday for *all* railroaders, codified in the collective bargaining agreements of all unions who are party to national negotiations; and

Be it further resolved, that RWU urge workers and their unions that are not party to the national freight agreement (Amtrak, commuter railroads, short lines, regionals, etc.) to do the same and push for MLK Day as a paid holiday; and

Be it further Resolved that RWU urge the rail unions to publicly state their support for MLK Day and their intention to bargain the day as a paid holiday for their members; and

Be it finally Resolved that this Resolution be shared with civil rights organizations, labor unions, and other potential allies in the struggle to make MLK Day an officially recognized paid holiday for all railroad workers.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 4/2/19