A s part of our ongoing ef-
fort to con-
clude nation-
al contract
negotiations, the Coordinated Bargaining
Group (CBG) met with the na-
tion’s freight rail carriers (NCCC) for three days during the week of June 26th. These efforts were part of our ongoing mediation process, mandated by the Rail-
way Labor Act when the parties have been unable to reach a vol-
untary agreement, and managed by the National Mediation Board.

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

It is clear from the Carriers’
latest contract demands that they are emboldened by the potential
of management-friendly recom-
mandations that could come from a Presidential Emergency
Board appointed by President
Trump, and ultimately be im-
posed on the employees by a
Congress that already has enact-
ed or is pushing for changes in
longstanding labor laws that pro-
tect employee rights.

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

The Carriers’ latest offer is
neither a fair settlement, nor a
settlement that we expect our
members would ratify. So that
you all are fully aware of what
has been proposed, and in an
effort to bring all affected mem-
bers up to speed, the Carriers’
latest proposal, with a brief syn-
opis, can be found at: http://
btl.by/2unCc00

More information will be
forthcoming after the media-
tion sessions scheduled later in
July. We appreciate your con-
tinuing support.

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

Collectively, the CBG unions represent more than 85,000 railroad workers covered by the var-
ious organizations’ national agreements, and comprise over 58% of the workforce that will be
impacted by the outcome of the current bargaining round.
A CHALLENGING ROUND OF BARGAINING CONTINUES

As noted on the front page of this edition of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News, and as it goes to press, the nation’s freight carriers (NCCC) have taken new bargaining positions in our long running national negotiations. On June 26th, the unions making up the Coordinated Bargaining Group (BLET, SMART TD, ATDA, BRS, NCP, and IBBE) were served new demands by the NCCC that would take away the long-standing practice of retroactive application of general wage increases, while dramatically increasing the employees’ monthly contribution towards their health insurance premium payments. In addition, the Carriers have demanded drastic changes to the design of the Health and Welfare plan that would shift huge additional costs to the employees when they use the benefits. Equally concerning are the demands for work rule changes for all operating employees that would require you to do more work for less money in many cases.

The unions making up the CBG made the decision to publicize this latest set of Carrier demands in an effort to ensure that all affected members are aware of exactly why there has been no voluntary settlement of our national contract to date. It is critical that all members are of this regard: no unions belonging to the CBG have agreed to these demands, they are the Carriers’ demands, not ours. They are unacceptable to our bargaining team, and we are certain that they also would not be acceptable to your rank and file voting members.

It is also important that all affected members understand why the Carriers are pushing these hard line demands now. When the Carriers and the Unions cannot reach a voluntary settlement in contract negotiations, the terms and conditions of the Railway Labor Act ultimately place our dispute in the hands of various levels of the federal government. Currently our bargaining group is in mediation managed by the National Mediation Board (NMB). If we are unable to reach a voluntary settlement, the next step in the process will be for the NMB to offer binding arbitration as a possible way to settle the dispute. At this writing, President Trump has put forward the names of two Republican appointees to fill open positions at the National Mediation Board (see article on Page 8 of this issue). Once those nominations are confirmed by the U.S. Senate, the Republican controlled NMB will be structured to not only put forward the proffer of arbitration, it will also be structured to manage the creation of a Presidential Emergency Board in conjunction with the White House—should the proffer of arbitration be rejected by either party to the negotiations.

It is obvious from these new demands that the Carriers have every expectation they have little to lose by taking this dispute to a Presidential Emergency Board, appointed by President Trump and managed by the soon to be Republican controlled NMB. While many of our members voted for President Trump with the belief that he would help working class Americans, this union’s freight members could soon find out whether that is true. Some members have sent in comments predicting that we will get a better contract recommendation than this at a Trump PEB, while others are very concerned that those recommendations will give the Carriers everything they now demand. The Carriers are betting on the latter of those two outcomes, and that is why the bargaining round has taken this recent turn.

Our goal and responsibility as your bargaining representatives is to measure all of these options carefully, and to find the best contract settlement available, whether that be through a voluntary settlement or by taking our dispute to a Trump PEB. As for a voluntary settlement, there is no reason for the Carriers to agree to any contract that had no chance of ratification. It is critical that all members carefully side with labor or with the corporations in our dispute?

As things may begin to progress rapidly in either direction, there may be additional developments and information by the time this edition of the News reaches you. Please stay involved in the Movement Unite, and additional updates will be provided on our website and Facebook pages as they develop.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET National President
CRAFTING A PRO-WORKER PATH TO A NEW NAFTA

The renegotiation of NAFTA is a historic opportunity. The U.S. has an opportunity to lead the way in replacing this flawed agreement with one that will set new priorities that put working families first.

BLET members ratify new contract with Indiana and Ohio Railway

On June 13, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Indiana and Ohio Railway (I&O).

The five-year agreement governs rates of pay, work rules and health and welfare benefits for approximately 50 engineers, conductors, and trainees. Members will see wage increases of 28.6 percent over the conductors, and trainees. Members will see wage increases of 28.6 percent over the

BLET members ratify new contract with Indiana and Ohio Railway

The U.S. has an opportunity to lead the way in replacing this flawed agreement with one that will set new priorities that put working families first.

The renegotiation of NAFTA is a historic opportunity. The U.S. has an opportunity to lead the way in replacing this flawed agreement with one that will set new priorities that put working families first.

Original NAFTA. That new labor chapter must have a robust new labor rights chapter that prohibits child labor and forced labor and protects the freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain through an independent union. In addition, these new labor rights must be enforceable by the same or better trade sanctions that protect commercial interests. And, there is a need to beef up the existing rules of origin when it comes to automobiles. Currently, North American-made vehicles only need to be made with 63.5 percent of its parts from this continent, allowing third-party nations to enter the supply chain with low-cost parts that put Americans out of work.

Additionally, NAFTA 2.0 must protect “Buy American” federal procurement provisions. As it stands, the trade deal undermines the program by requiring the federal government to treat foreign bidders as if they were U.S. bidders. Any update must eliminate language that undermines domestic or local preferences.

When it comes down to a new NAFTA, it’s really pretty simple. The current administration can fix the deal by being transparent with the process and removing some bad provisions and inserting some good ones that benefit workers, consumers, and U.S. manufacturers. The Teamsters stand ready to help with the effort.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
Teamsters General President

The BLET first organized the I&O on August 3, 2001, and a 78 percent majority of members ratified their first-ever union contract in 2003. I&O members belong to BLET Division 282 (Cincinnati, Ohio) and I&O members belong to BLET Division 282 (Cincinnati, Ohio).

For example, NAFTA mandated that vehicles made with 60 percent of their components in this country qualified as NAFTA-free. Under the new agreement, only 53.8 percent is required.

That doesn’t happen by opening the nation’s highways to Mexican-domiciled trucks and drivers who don’t meet American safety and certification standards. Motorists and the nation’s health have been jeopardized because of it. NAFTA 2.0 must strip such language out of any agreement going forward.

The renegotiation of NAFTA is a historic opportunity. The U.S. has an opportunity to lead the way in replacing this flawed agreement with one that will set new priorities that put working families first.
BLET concludes
San Antonio regional meeting

Approximately 335 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and their families convened in San Antonio the morning of June 6 for opening ceremonies of the BLET’s first regional meeting of 2017.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order. After presentation of flags by members of the Joint Base San Antonio Civic Honor Guard, retired Brother Derry Briggs delivered the invocation. Brother Briggs served as Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board from 2001-2015.

President Pierce then welcomed all members, families and guests to San Antonio. He introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance, and thanked National Vice President Jim Louis, Special Representative Matt Kromyak and Special Representative Jason Wright for their work in managing and organizing the regional meeting. President Pierce also recognized and thanked the regional meeting arrangements committee members who provided local support: Warren Stevens, Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of Division 197; Luis Esparza, Trustee and Member of Division 197; L.W. (Wayne) Davis, Legislative Representative of Division 91B, and Brother Briggs, a retired member of Division 530 and former Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board.

President Pierce delivered remarks regarding the anti-union movement that exists in America and encouraged all BLET members to become involved to reverse this trend. “There’s a huge storm brewing—not only for BLET members and their Brothers and Sisters who work in the railroad industry, but for all workers and for the American Middle Class,” he said.

President Pierce encouraged all members to become active and involved in their union and in politics in order to protect what the union has earned. “We face a fight like none of us have ever experienced. And it won’t happen in a single, winner-take-all battle. Instead, years of attacks on labor, some hidden in seemingly harmless legislation, lie ahead. That means we need all hands on deck, and we need to educate our membership exactly how stark are the risks we face if we don’t become leaders and encourage all BLET members to become active and involved in their union and in politics in order to protect what they have earned.”

Pierce called the meeting to order. After the invocation, Brother Briggs served as Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board.

President Pierce then introduced Lin-da Chavez-Thompson, who was elected by acclamation to serve as Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO in 1995, a position she held until her retirement in 2007. She was the Democratic nominee to run for the office of Lieutenant Governor of Texas in 2010.

“Your union was founded 154 years ago by a group of people who said ‘enough is enough,’” Chavez-Thompson said. “Generations later, the union they established is in your hands. What are you going to do with it? You’re here today because you are already union leaders. But sometimes our members forget the fight. They forget the sacrifices that have been made on their behalf by those who came before us. It is your job to pass on what you learn here today. It’s your job to pass on the baton of educating and energizing others to carry on the union. Make sure they carry on the love of the union and teach them to give and to sacrifice for the union."

The next guest speaker was Jodi Wallace, Alternate National Treasurer of the BLET Auxiliary. Sister Wallace described the relationship between the BLET and the BLET Auxiliary, and how they often work hand-in-hand to fight for issues of importance to BLET members and their families. She also gave an update on the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Program, announcing the names of recent winners and recognizing the parents who were in attendance.

National Vice President Gil Gore, the next guest speaker, spoke about the benefits of belonging to a union and the BLET in particular, which includes: higher wages, health and welfare benefits, pension, seniority, due process, a voice in Washington, D.C., Railroad Retirement, and the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA). Like Sister Chavez-Thompson, Vice President Gore discussed the importance of mentoring young members to become leaders and encouraged all BLET members to conduct themselves with dignity and honor. He received more than one standing ovation for his moving and emotional speech.

Walt Barrows, Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board, discussed the health of the Railroad Retirement system. He said that there are many challenges facing the Railroad Retirement today, but encouraged members and their unions to maintain constant vigilance to protect it.

“What has protected Railroad Retirement for the past 82 years is a strong labor movement,” Barrows said. “Railroad Retirement is an earned benefit, not a gift. The money that railroads pay into the system is money that is earned by your labor. It isn’t a gift.”

The opening ceremony also included a memorial ceremony in which the names of all BLET members killed in the line of duty since 1989 were shown in a solemn video presentation. Those in attendance also observed a moment of silence in honor of retired BLE International Vice President Ed Watson, who passed away on May 31, and former BLE International Vice President Jim Shell, who passed away on June 1.

The June 6 session included a closed meeting for BLET members and an open meeting hosted by the BLET Auxiliary. Members took advantage of educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week. Workshops featured specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers and Local Chairmen. The 2017 San Antonio regional meeting concluded with a banquet on the evening of June 8. The BLET’s second 2017 regional meeting will be held August 14-18 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. More specific information is available at: www.ble-t.org/regional/ 80
BR&CF offers huge savings with the least expensive protection when suspended or dismissed as discipline for eligible occurrences. Daily benefit levels are available at $80, $100, $120, $150, $180, $200, $220, and $250. Dues are as little as $30.40 per month or a maximum of $95 per month at the highest level.

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Call our office, toll-free, if you have any questions (800) 233-7080

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Jeff Thurman reelected General Chairman of BNSF (former SLSF)/MNA GCA

Jeffrey L. Thurman was reelected by acclamation to his second term as General Chairman of the BNSF (former SLSF)/MNA General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) at the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in St. Louis, Mo., held from May 23-25, 2017. A BNSF locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 172 (Fort Worth, Texas), Brother Thurman was elected by acclamation to serve the GCA as 3rd Vice General Chairman in 2009, a position he was reelected to by acclamation for a second term in 2013. In June of 2013, he was elevated to the office of General Chairman when R.C. (Rick) Gibbons was elevated to serve on the BLET Advisory Board as a National Vice President.

Also elected by acclamation during the quadrennial meeting was: 1st Vice Chairman Randy J. Dumey, Division 595 (Chaffee, Mo.); Secretary-Treasurer William D. Honeycutt, Division 285 (Thayer, Mo.); 2nd Vice Chairman H.C. Bolen, Division 285 (Thayer, Mo.); 3rd Vice Chairman Kyle W. King, Division 578 (Tulsa, Okla.); 4th Vice Chairman Brett D. Jones, Division 386 (Birmingham, Ala.); 1st Alternate Vice Chairman Christopher M. Phillips, Division 172 (Fort Worth, Texas); and 2nd Alternate Vice Chairman Daniel Holdcroft, Division 502 (Kansas City, Mo.).

Additional members elected include: Brother William E. Brake, Division 502 (Kansas City, Mo.); and Daniel Holdcroft, Division 502 (Kansas City, Mo.); Bobby J. Szenasi, Division 604 (Madill, Okla.); and Daniel Holdcroft, Division 502 (Kansas City, Mo.).

Appointed to the Audit Committee were: Kyle W. King, Division 578 (Tulsa, Okla.); Bobby J. Szenasi, Division 604 (Madill, Okla.); and Daniel Holdcroft, Division 502 (Kansas City, Mo.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; National Vice President Michael D. Priester; and National Vice President R.C. (Rick) Gibbons.

“I am proud to congratulate Brother Thurman along with all officers of the BNSF (former SLSF)/MNA General Committee of Adjustment,” President Pierce said. “I thank these Brothers for making the time to serve our Brotherhood, and I have every confidence they will continue doing an excellent job of protecting the rights of our Brothers and Sisters working for the BNSF.”

Special guests from throughout the Brotherhood included: Brian Kelley, Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman; David Spradlin, Kansas City Southern General Chairman; Alan Holdcroft, BNSF (ATSF) General Chairman; Bob Cunningham, BNSF (ATSF) Vice General Chairman; Chris Mosser, BNSF (ATSF) Secretary-Treasurer; Bobby Brown, BNSF (FW&D-C&S-CRI&P) General Chairman; Joe Berlin, BNSF (FW&D-C&S-CRI&P) Vice General Chairman; Tim Williamson, BNSF (FW&D-C&S-CRI&P) Secretary-Treasurer; Jerry LaPrath, BNSF/MRL General Chairman; and Kent Pseha, BNSF/MRL Vice General Chairman.

Mary Shaver of the Federal Railroad Administration (Region VI) was a guest speaker at the quadrennial meeting. Additionally, all Local Chairmen in attendance received BLET Years of Service pins, which were presented by National President Pierce.

Brother Thurman hired out with the Burlington Northern at Enid, Okla., on February 11, 1994. He was promoted to conductor on March 25, 1994, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on April 19, 1995. He transferred his seniority to Fort Worth, Texas, in September of 2002, and he joined the Brotherhood on September 3, 2003.

He has been an involved and active BLET member throughout his railroad career. Brother Thurman has served as Local Chairman of Division 604 and as Local Chairman of Division 172. He represented his Division as a Delegate to the BLET’s First National Convention in 2006, and has represented the BLET as a Delegate to the Teamsters International Convention. Also, Brother Thurman has served on the National Division Arrangements Committee at the BLET’s Second National Convention in 2010 and Third National Convention in 2014. The BNSF (former SLSF)/MNA General Committee of Adjustment represents nearly 800 locomotive engineers from 16 different divisions, including engineers and trainmen for the BNSF Railway and the Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad.

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Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson recently signed into law a BLET-backed bill that imposes harsher penalties on criminals who target railroad personnel. Act 955 is designed “to protect freight rail employees and public transit employees by enhancing the penalties of certain criminal offenses.” Introduced as Arkansas House Bill 2116 on March 27, 2017, the measure passed the state House on March 27 by a 76-6 majority and passed the state Senate on March 29 by a 34-0 majority. Governor Hutchinson, a Republican, signed the bill on April 6, 2017.

Brother Terry L. Todd, Chairman of the BLET Arkansas State Legislative Board, said the legislation is designed to discourage terrorist acts against freight railroads and public transportation. It protects locomotive engineers, conductors, switchmen, brakemen, trainmen, and firemen, and also railroad managers.

Criminals are subject to enhanced sentences under this law for attacks against freight rail or public transit employees. Harsher penalties would be enforced for the following misdemeanors and felonies:

- **Class A Misdemeanor** or an unclassified Misdemeanor with a possible sentence greater than 90 days imprisonment, an additional period of imprisonment of not more than one year;
- **Class C Felony**, Class D felony, or an unclassified felony, an additional period of imprisonment of at least six months but no more than two years; and
- **Class Y Felony**, Class A felony, or Class B felony, an additional period of imprisonment of at least two years but no more than 10 years.

Brother Todd said Arkansas State Senator Eddie Joe Williams, a retired member of BLET Division 585, helped guide the bill through the Senate. He also worked with his counterparts in the SMART Transportation Division to lobby for the bill — SMART President Dennis R. Pierce, SMART/SMART-AD Arkansas State Legislative Director and Wayne Denson, SMART/SMART-AD Arkansas State Legislative 1st Vice Chairman — and received support from the Arkansas State AFL-CIO.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked Brother Todd and all BLET members in their lobbying efforts for Arkansas who fought for the bill. “I thank Brother Terry Todd for his diligence in lobbying to secure passage of this bill,” President Pierce said. “All rail workers and the traveling public will benefit from the passage of Act 955.”

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson (headset) signs Act 955 into law on April 6, 2017. The bill seeks to discourage terrorist acts by imposing harsher penalties on criminals who target railroad and public transportation workers. Standing, from left, Arkansas State Senator Eddie Joe Williams (a retired member of BLET Division 585); Terry Todd, BLET Arkansas State Legislative Chairman; Wayne Denson, SMART/SMART-AD Arkansas State Legislative 1st Vice Chairman; and Gerald Sale, SMART/SMART-AD Arkansas State Legislative Director.

RRB issuing statements of service (Form BA-6)


Each year, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) prepares a Certificate of Service Months and Compensation Amount for every railroad employee who had creditable railroad compensation in the previous calendar year. The RRB will mail the forms to employees during the first half of June. While every effort has been made to maintain current addresses for all active railroad employees, anyone with compensation reported in 2015 who has not received Form BA-6 by July 1, or needs a replacement, should contact the nearest RRB field office by calling the agency’s toll-free number, 1-877-772-5772.

Form BA-6 provides employees with a record of their railroad retirement service and compensation, and the information shown is used to determine whether an employee qualifies for benefits and the amount of those benefits. It is important that employees review their Form BA-6 to see whether their own records of service months and creditable compensation agree with the figures shown on the form.

In checking the 2016 compensation total, employees should be aware that only annual earnings up to $18,300 were creditable for railroad retirement purposes in that year, and that $118,500 is the maximum amount shown on the form. To assist employees in reviewing their service credits, the form also shows service credited on a month-by-month basis for 2015, 2014, and 2013, when the creditable compensation maximum was $118,000 for 2015; $117,000 for 2014; and $113,700 for 2013. The form also identifies the employer(s) reporting the employee’s compensation.

Besides the months of service reportable on Form BA-6, an employee’s 2016 service and compensation are shown on the form because the employee’s regular compensation is shown as an allowance included in an employee’s tier II earnings maximum for the year. In this case, the RRB is encouraging employees to compare the amount of an allowance included in an employee’s tier II earnings maximum for the year with the amount of an allowance included in an employee’s tier II earnings maximum for the year. The form also indicates the number of months of verified military service creditable as service under the Railroad Retirement Act. If the service was performed after January 22, 1974, the employee must file a statement with the RRB. Employees are encouraged to submit proofs of age and/or military service in advance of their actual retirement. Filing these proofs with the RRB in advance will streamline the benefit application process and prevent payment delays.

For employees who received separation or severance payments, the section of the form designated Taxable Amount shows the amounts reported by employers of any separation allowance or severance payments that were subject to railroad retirement tier II taxes. This information is shown on the form because a lump sum, approximating part or all of the tier II taxes deducted from such pay- ments made after 1984 which did not provide additional tier II credits, may be pay- able by the RRB upon retirement to qualified employees or to survivors if the employee dies before retirement. The amount of an allowance included in an employee's regular compensation is shown under Compensation Amount. Form BA-6 also shows, in the section designated Separation Allowance, the cumulative amount of tier II railroad retirement payroll taxes paid by the employee over and above tier I social security equivalent payroll taxes. While the RRB does not collect or maintain payroll tax information, the agency compu-"
Trump nominates two Republicans to NMB

I

n June, President Don-
ald Trump nominated
Republicans Gerald W. (Trey) Fauth III and Kyle Forsston to positions on the three-member National Mediation Board (NMB). Democrat Linda Puchala, a NMB member since mid-2009, is expected to be reappointed to a third term, but there has been no formal announcement. If confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Fauth would serve a three-year term expiring July 1, 2020. Mr. Fauth has more than 35 years of professional experience in the private sector and Federal Government, working on economic, regulatory, public policy, and legislative issues related to transportation. He has been involved in negotiating, mediating, arbitrating, facilitating, supporting via expert testimony, or deciding the resolution of hundreds of transportation problems and disputes during his career. Mr. Fauth has worked at the U.S. Surface Transportation Board, where he served for more than three years as Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to a Board Member. Forsston would serve the remainder of a three-year term expiring July 1, 2019. Ms. Forsston is currently the labor policy director at the U.S. Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee, having served in that position since 2010. Ms. Forsston previously served as labor policy director for a NMB three-member panel from 2004 to 2010. Before that, she was a policy analyst with the National Republican Congressional Committee from 2003 to 2004. She graduated with a B.A. in History from the University of Colorado in 1996, and with a J.D. from George Washington Univer-
sity in 1999. Established by the 1934 amendments to the Railway Labor Act, the NMB is an independent U.S. government agency that facilitates labor-management relations within the nation’s railroad and airline industries. Pursuant to the RLA, NMB programs provide dispute resolution processes to meet its statutory objectives: avoiding interruption to commerce or to the operation of any carrier; forbidding any limitation upon freedom of association among employees; providing for the prompt and orderly settlement of all disputes concerning rates of pay, rules, or working conditions; and providing for the prompt and orderly settlement of all disputes growing out of grievances related to the implementation and management of collective bargaining agreements.