

**PRESIDENT PIERCE TESTIFIES FOR PTC, TWO-PERSON CREWS AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARING**

Dennis Pierce, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and President of the Teamsters Rail Conference, testified before the U.S. House of Representatives June 2 and urged the timely implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC), coupled with a minimum two-person operating crew to ensure safety along the nation’s railroads.

Testifying before the House’s Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee at a hearing titled “ Oversight of the Amtrak Accident in Philadelphia,” President Pierce’s testimony covered several core elements of federal oversight of the railroad industry, stressing that two-person train crews backed by PTC would go a long way toward preventing future accidents.

While PTC would help mitigate accidents, he said, it should not be used to replace crew members who work inside the cab of America’s locomotives.

“PTC is no silver bullet,” he said. “It’s not designed to prevent every accident and any claim that PTC renders the second crew member unnecessary is just not true. PTC can’t replace the second crew member. It doesn’t provide a second set of eyes and ears trained on the road ahead, or monitor the ‘left’ side of the train for defects like hot wheels, stack brakes or shifted lading, or observe the ‘left’ side of highway-rail grade crossings for drivers who fail to stop or separate stopped trains that block crossings to allow first responders to cross the tracks.”

In support of two-person train operations, President Pierce urged members of the T&I Committee to take up and support Congressman Don Young’s (R-Ak) Safe Freight Act — H.R. 1763 — that would require two crew members inside the locomotive cabs of freight trains and light engines used in connection with the movement of freight.

He also downplayed the notion of inward-facing cameras as an accident prevention measure.

“Cameras can be an accident investigation tool but they create a false sense of security if more than that is expected,” he said. “Cameras don’t slow stop trains, PTC does.”

The truth is that some railroad operations, President Pierce said. “Amtrak is a good investment … a necessary resource, and shortchanging Amtrak creates other costs elsewhere. I strongly urge you to provide the resources necessary for Amtrak to thrive and grow, and not just to limp along.”

Others witnesses who also testified include: Christopher Hart, Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board; Joseph H. Boardman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak; and Sarah Feinberg, Acting Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration.

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**BLET urges FRA to require additional buffer cars on crude oil trains**

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is urging the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the nation’s Class 1 rail carriers to take action to address a serious shortcoming in current railroad operating regulations that endangers the lives of train crew members who work on crude oil trains.

Specifically, the BLET is asking the FRA to take regulatory action to mandate an increased number of buffer cars between the lead locomotive and trailing tank cars that contain oil. Current regulations require five buffer cars on a mixed freight train if the first car contains oil, but through a loophole in the regulations, only one buffer car is required on unit oil trains that could contain over 100 oil tankers. In derailments, locomotives can be a primary ignition source for spilled oil.

“Since engine and train crews occupy the cab of that potential ignition source, there should be as much distance away from the fuel source as possible,” wrote BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce in a letter to FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg on April 28, 2015. “Five cars may be insufficient, but one car is obviously not enough.”

“The recent series of unit oil train derailments makes it plain for all to see that [the current] rule bears no relationship whatsoever to safe operations,” Pierce continued. “A change in the rule would require minor, easily accommodated operational changes and not the need for some expensive technology.”

Not only would the extra buffer cars make for a safer work environment, Pierce wrote, it would also allow train crew members to help ensure public safety in the event of future oil train derailments.

“Such a measure could help the Casselton, North Dakota wreck and the more recent CSX accident at Mount Carbon, West Virginia could have been much worse were it not for a two-person crew taking swift action to separate the locomotive from the remaining cars,” President Pierce also called for Congress to increase funding for Amtrak.

“We can’t expect Amtrak to run a first-class railroad if it’s funded at Third World levels,” Pierce said. “Amtrak is a good investment … a necessary resource, and shortchanging Amtrak creates other costs elsewhere. I strongly urge you to provide the resources necessary for Amtrak to thrive and grow, and not just to limp along.”

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A copy of President Pierce’s statement appears on Page 2 of this issue.

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In a coal dominant region, a trio of vibrant BNSF locomotives, including brand new GE ES44C4 No. 8093 leads a westbound crude oil empty through downtown St. Albans, WV as the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota from an oil facility in Yorktown, Va. Photo: Chase Garone

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**Right To Work Update**

Missouri Gov. Nixon vetoes RTW bill

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**Texas Retirement**

Pedigoe elected Texas SLB Chairman; Terry Briggs retires
saving lives

President Pierce says two-person train crews and Positive Train Control would combine to drastically improve railroad safety

O
good morning, Chair-
man Shuster, Rank-
ing Member De-
Fazio, and Members of the Committee. My name is Dennis Pierce and I am the Na-
tional President of the Broth-
erhood of Locomotive Engi-
neers and Trainmen, or BLET, which has nearly 39,000 active mem-
bers; I also am the Presi-
dent of the 70,000-member Rail Conference of the Internation-
al Brotherhood of Teamsters. My testimony today will en-
compass the views and con-
cerns of both groups.

I would like to begin by of-
ferring my most sincere condo-
ellences to the victims of the trag-
ic Amtrak 188 accident and to their families. One of the most dif-
cult parts of my job is when I have to convey the BLET’s sor-
row to the families of members killed in the line of duty. I have had to do that eleven times — to the families of Glenn Steele, Chance Gober, Dan Hall, John Hall, Todd Burckhard, J. G. Hadden, Chris Carter, Tom An-
derson, Tom Kenay, Stanley Watts and Darrell Amerson — since I became BLET National President on July 1, 2010, and unfortunately I fear that I will have to do it many more times during my tenure.

What is even more difficult to accept is when proven safety technology exists that could have prevented even one of those deaths. In fact, of the eleven names I just mentioned, five of those deaths could have been prevented by Positive Train Control alone. Further, for the period from 2005 through 2013, the NTSB completed 16 inves-
tigations of railroad accidents that could have been prevented or mitigated with Positive Train Control (PTC). These 16 acci-
dents claimed 53 lives and in-
jured 942 others; the damages totaled hundreds of millions of dollars. These figures exclude the PTC-preventable accidents that NTSB did not investigate. So believe me when I say that I share the frustration of those whose lives have been forever changed by the Amtrak 188 tragedy.

As background information, the BLET’s Safety Task Force is a party to the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board in-
vestigation of Amtrak 188. An investigative team from the Broth-
erhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference is also assisting in the investigation. Both Organizations are governed by the NTSB’s confidentiality rules and, therefore, and have been asked not disclose any in-
vestigative information that may have come to our attention un-
less it has been publicly released by the NTSB. In this regard, the NTSB has publicly commented on two points. One is that excess train speed at the Frankford Junction curve contributed to Amtrak 188 leaving the tracks. The other is that this accident would not have occurred if PTC, as an overlay on top of the existing signal sys-

tem, had been operational. Beyond that, I can tell you that the Amtrak 188 tragedy places a number of core ele-
ments of federal oversight of the nation’s railroads front and cen-
ter. One is the statutory mandate that PTC be imple-
mented by year’s end. Another is the safety redundancies afford-
ed by maintaining two-person crews in locomotive cabs. A third is the vexing issue of crew fatigue. Fourth, I want to brief-
ly address forward-facing cam-
eras as I am certain that sub-
ject will come up during this hearing. And, finally, I want to com-
ment on the nation’s ex-
ceptions for Amtrak.

But before I turn to those is-
uces, I’d like to spend a few mo-
ments giving you — and all those watching — the unique perspec-
tive shared by locomotive engi-
neers and, indeed, all railroad operating employees. It is impor-
tant that you spend a few min-
utes in our shoes, because what non-railroaders see as solutions to problems often bring with them adverse unintended con-
sequences that we can identify in advance.

About one in ten thousand Americans is a working locomo-
tive engineer today. We comprise one of the most highly skilled, highly trained and highly regu-
lated and federally licensed pro-

essions in the nation’s workforce.

Our work is very dangerous, with the potential for catastrophe — for ourselves, our co-workers, the traveling public and the commu-
nications through which we work — almost always lurking in the back-
ground, as May 12th starkly re-
minds us.

Just as in nearly every other workplace over the past couple of decades, technology has rev-
olutionized the workplace of lo-
como
tive engineers in freight and pas-

tenger service. In fact, the ef-
ciciency and the productivity of today’s locomotive engineer are at levels that couldn’t be imagined 50 years ago.

But the increased efficiency and productivity due to various technologies is increas-
ingly being offset by heightened safety risks:

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BLET National Division Electronic Communications Policy

Official communications be-

between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspon-
dence, bearing a signature, being received

by the National President to be consid-
ered an “official communication.” This is to

provide that the actual question(s) are

addressed, and ensures that when official

interpretations are made they have refer-

tance to a specific request and can be used in

future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National Presi-
dent will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a time-

ly response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-

mails that do not provide sufficient in-

formation concerning the sender to en-
able National Division staff to confirm the

sender’s membership status will not receive

any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

cy is intended to allow the National Presi-
dent to be aware of the opinions and sug-
gestions of the membership, while at the

same time providing a timely response to

the member’s unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without need-
lessly expending limited BLET resources.

Adopted at Cleveland, Ohio on


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Wall Street's continuing war against workers seems endless. Just when you think it can't get any worse, it does. And even when big players in the financial world get caught for wrongdoing, the penalties never seem to make a difference.

The latest example happened recently when the Justice Department announced that five major banks -- Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Barclays, The Royal Bank of Scotland and UBS -- were pleading guilty to felony charges and agreeing to pay more than $5 billion to settle charges they had worked together to manipulate international interest and foreign exchange rates.

Yet despite the "brazen" activity by the banks, as Attorney General Loretta Lynch put it, "I am proud to congratulate and thank Brother Schulz and the officers of the Wisconsin State Legislative Board. I have every confidence they will do an excellent job of representing the best interests of BLET members in Wisconsin."
Driscoll elected Conrail SSA/CSXT-ND General Chairman

Brother Patrick T. Driscoll, BLET Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.), was elected to his first full term as General Chairman of the Conrail SSA/CSXT-Northern District General Committee of Adjustment at the Board’s quadrennial meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., May 19-20, 2015.

Brother Driscoll joined the BLET in 1994 as a Conrail locomotive engineer and has been an officer of Division 382 since 2000. He was elected Local Chairman in 2006, 2009 and 2012. He has served the GCA as Vice General Chairman and Alternate General Chairman, and in 2014 served the National Division as a member of the By-laws Committee at the Third National Convention in Las Vegas. Driscoll had been serving as General Chairman since January 1, 2015, following the promotion of former General Chairman James P. Louis to the office of National Vice President.

Also elected to the GCA were: 1st Vice General Chairman Harvey N. Benn, IV, Division 469 (Syracuse, N.Y.); Alternate General Chairman Rich Vogt, Jr., Division 387 (Camden, N.J.); 2nd Vice General Chairman Greg Lund, Division 421 (Buffalo); 3rd Vice General Chairman Mark Krajewski, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.); Secretary-Treasurer Chris Eleczko, Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Rich Bartela, Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Vice President Gil L. Gore; and National Vice President Louis.

"I offer my congratulations and thanks to all officers of the Conrail General Committee of Adjustment," President Pierce said. "Brother Driscoll has some big shoes to fill but I have every confidence he will do an excellent job representing our members and protecting their interests."

Special guest Dave Kearing, Chairman of the New York State Legislative Board, was also in attendance. Also in attendance from the National Division were John Fink, Director of Bylaws Administration, and Matt Kronyak, Special Representative. Both are members of BLET Divisions belonging to the Conrail SSA/CSXT-Northern District GCA.

The General Committee is comprised of 14 different BLET Local Divisions on two properties (Conrail Shared Assets and CSXT Northern District) and represents approximately 1,400 active and retired members.

Missouri Gov. Nixon vetoes Right To Work bill

Organized labor scored a major victory on June 4 as Governor Jay Nixon vetoed legislation that would have made Missouri the 26th Right To Work state in America.

In a statement regarding his veto of House Bill 16, Gov. Nixon said: "This extreme measure would take our state backward, squeeze the middle-class, lower wages for Missouri families, and subject businesses to criminal and unlimited civil liability. Right To Work is wrong for Missouri, it’s wrong for the middle-class — and it must never become the law of the Show-Me-State."

He vetoed the bill at UAW Local 249 in Kansas City with scores of union members and supporters in attendance. Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Kelley represented the BLET at the veto ceremony.

"It was an honor to be there," Brother Kelley said. "There was so much energy and emotion in the air you could feel it. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked Brother Kelley and all involved for their efforts to lobby against the anti-worker legislation. "First and foremost, a big thank you goes out to all BLET Brothers and Sisters and their families in Missouri who took the time to make their voices heard on this issue. Also, Brother Kelley has gone above and beyond the call of duty in fighting against the Right To Work bill in Missouri, and he deserves our thanks for all his hard work and dedication. I also would like to recognize National Vice President Jim Louis and BLET National Mobilization Coordinator West Paul Aird for orchestrating our membership response through the Mobilization network," President Pierce said.

Supporters of the bill are lobbying the Missouri House and Senate in an attempt to override the Governor’s veto. The BLET is monitoring the situation closely and will launch another mobilization drive, if necessary, to help oppose these anti-union efforts.

President Pierce and Brother Kelley also thanked Gov. Nixon for vetoing the bill and standing up for labor, their families and the middle-class. "I called the governor’s office and told his staff to thank him," Brother Kelley said. "We cannot thank him enough... that is for sure!"
Gary Pedigo elected Texas State Legislative Board Chairman: Briggs retired June 2

The BLET’s Texas State Legislative Board held its 14th quadrennial convention on April 19-21 in Austin, Texas. In attendance were delegates representing 38 of the 41 Local Divisions in Texas. Brother Gary R. Pedigo, BLET Division 177 (Denison, Texas), was elected by acclamation to the office of Chairman. Incumbent Chairman Terry D. Briggs, Division 530 (Commerce, Texas), did not seek reelection and retired effective June 2, 2015.

Pedigo was elected Second Vice Chairman at the Texas State Legislative Board’s 13th quadrennial convention in 2011. He also currently serves as Local Chairman and Legislative Representative of Division 177. A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Pedigo has held continuous membership in the BLET since January 1, 1979. According to the Texas SLB Bylaws, terms of office for all newly elected officers begin on June 1. Re-elected to serve as First Vice Chairman was Benjamin L. Wright, Division 189 (Fort Worth, Texas). Redelected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer was Scott J. Pieparks, Division 620 (Fort Worth, Texas). Also elected were: Second Vice Chairman Catarino A. Garcia, Division 566; (Dayton, Texas); Alternate Second Vice Chairman Larry J. Williams, Division 944 (Dallas, Texas); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Warren D. Stevens, Division 197 (San Antonio, Texas). Elected to serve on the audit committee were: Allen C. Allee, Division 703 (Teague, Texas); Larry M. Yaws, Division 574 (Amarillo, Texas); and Tommy L. Johnson, Division 871 (Sharon, Texas).

Representing the National Division at the quadrennial meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce, First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tidman; Vice President Michael D. Twombly; Vice President Cole W. Davis; and Vice President Michael D. Priester. Vice Presidents Twombly, Davis and Priester are assigned to the various properties operating in Texas. The General Chairman from each General Committee of Adjustment representing one or more Local Divisions in the state of Texas also attended.

“I offer my congratulations to Brother Pedigo and I know that he and all officers of the Texas State Legislative Board will do a fine job of representing the best interests of our members in the proud state of Texas,” President Pierce said. “I also express my deepest thanks to Brother Terry Briggs for his years of selfless service to the Brotherhood and its members as a Division officer, a Convention Delegate, and as a State Legislative Board Chairman. On behalf of the BLET, I wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.”

Brother Briggs announced his retirement following a railroad career that spanned over 44 years. He hired out on the Rock Island in Shawnee, Okla., on April 11, 1971, and first joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 1973. He was elected to the office of Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board in 2001, following the election of former Chairman Raymond Holmes to the office of BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative. Brother Briggs was reelected to the Texas State Legislative Board Chairman’s office in 2003, 2007 and 2011. He was also active with the BLET’s National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC) for many years.

Established in 1889, the Texas State Legislative Board represents 41 divisions and more than 3,500 active BLET members.

Continued on page 6
tivation for the westbound move a higher priority. Was that decision a human error on which to attribute the accident? Similarly, if we eventually learn that, for some reason, the engineer of Amtrak 188 became temporarily confused as to his location, it would be reasonable to conclude that the simple use of speed signs in the approach to the curve, as a reminder, may have prevented NTSB.(I recently saw a table that I believe the NTSB presented on August of 1969 through the end of 2013, which detailed over 140 PTC preventable accidents that killed 288, injured over 6,500 and resulted in over $327 million in property damage. There has been PTC development, but no full implementation on any railroad throughout almost that entire period.

The final impetus for a PTC mandate was the September 12, 2008 head-on collision between a Metra commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train in Chatsworth, California. That accident claimed the lives of 22 people over 100 others who were on board. Congress responded swiftly — and appropriately — by enacting the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 less than a month after the tragedy.

The RSIA established a December 31, 2013 deadline for upgrading all major freight and commuter tracks on routes where it is required. However, significant segments of the industry began dragging their feet on PTC before the ink on the legislation was dry. These dilatory tactics included using the Federal Railroad Administration in order to paralyze its rulemaking efforts to execute what is in the face of its legislative will. And even today industry lobbyists are telling you that the railroads need a blanket extension of five years.

But do these problems justify a blanket, industry-wide delay of 5-7 years? Amtrak doesn’t think so. In fact, long before the May 12th tragedy Amtrak announced that it would be able to meet the deadline. Coming from a railroad that relies so heavily on government funding, I think that says a great deal about whether the December 31, 2015 deadline is reasonable. Also — if my memory serves correctly — BNSF Railway likewise plans to install PTC with or without a government mandate.

These rail carriers should be commendable at least for trying to meet the requirements of the law since it passed or even before it passed. So I want to underscore today that you should not be stampeded into granting a blanket PTC delay. Address the legitimate peripheral problems, to be sure, but hold the industry’s feet to the fire to implement as much as they can by the statutory deadline, and provide strong evidence of localized problems — to FRA’s satisfaction — that may cause them to miss the deadline on some portions of their system. If you don’t do that, you will reward bad behavior … punnish BNSF and Amtrak for making PTC the economic priority you demanded in 2008 … and dishonor the memory of those who perished in Philadelphia on May 12th.

1. CREW SIZE

As much life-saving promise as PTC holds, it is by no means a silver bullet — it won’t prevent every railroad accident because it’s not designed to prevent every railroad accident. This is important to remember, because there are some who erroneously insist that deployment of PTC will render the second crew member in the locomotive cab unnecessary. On freight trains that second crew member is the conductor, and on many Amtrak intercity trains that do not operate on the Northeast Corridor it’s a second locomotive engineer.

While PTC as an overlay on an existing signal system will, indeed, prevent many serious railroad accidents, it cannot replace a conductor or a second engineer because the technology doesn’t do all the things that those crew members do. In addition to in-cab safety redundancy at numerous levels throughout the trip, the public safety aspect of the duties of this second engine crew member includes, among other things: monitoring the “left” side of the train for defects such as stuck brakes or shifting derailed to mention just two … observing the “left” side of high-speed rail grade crossings for drivers who fail to stop for the approaching train … and separating stopped trains that are blocking crossroads, to facilitate the movement of motor vehicles operated by first responders and other emergency personnel who must cross the tracks.

But just because the deadline for Amtrak 188 was extended to May 12, 2012, does not mean that the engineer or the train itself has been re-equipped. In fact, there have been some significant problems. Obtaining radio spectrum has been difficult, particularly in some metropolitan areas. And the Federal Communications Commission’s process for approving radio towers was no match for the urgency that PTC has triggered. These are legitimate roadblocks to a national implementation of PTC, and should be addressed as such.

II. FATIGUE

Another oversight concern is crew members. To be sure, I can say at the outset that I am not suggesting fatigue was or may have been a causal factor in Amtrak 188. I don’t believe that sufficient information has been put forth for anyone to make such a determination. However — and like PTC — fatigue mitigation has been a subject that NTSB has pointed to again and again as a causal factor in rail accidents.

This Committee knows well how serious this issue is. Hours of service laws governing operating employees are fundamentally overridden by Congress in 2008, with enactment of the RSIA. But, I want to say, those efforts have produced very little progress has been made on this front since then.

Particularly troubling is the fact that poor work schedules have contributed towards how to prevent fatigue in the railroad industry have almost uniformly centered on providing a risk-monitoring mechanism for those employees who may be suffering from a sleep disorder. It is true that there has been some progress toward this goal, but in general these programs are an afterthought and have been disregarded.

Another oversight concern is crew member fatigue or inattention due to poor work schedules. This is a growing problem. Amtrak recently reported that, in the aftermath of the tragic accident on the Northeast Corridor on May 12, 2015, 100 others who were on board. Congress responded swiftly — and appropriately — by enacting the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 less than a month after the tragedy.

The RSIA established a December 31, 2013 deadline for upgrading all major freight and commuter tracks on routes where it is required. However, significant segments of the industry began dragging their feet on PTC before the ink on the legislation was dry. These dilatory tactics included using the Federal Railroad Administration in order to paralyze its rulemaking efforts to execute what is in the face of its legislative will. And even today industry lobbyists are telling you that the railroads need a blanket extension of five years.

But do these problems justify a blanket, industry-wide delay of 5-7 years? Amtrak doesn’t think so. In fact, long before the May 12th tragedy Amtrak announced that it would be able to meet the deadline. Coming from a railroad that relies so heavily on government funding, I think that says a great deal about whether the December 31, 2015 deadline is reasonable. Also — if my memory serves correctly — BNSF Railway likewise plans to install PTC with or without a government mandate.

These rail carriers should be commendable at least for trying to meet the requirements of the law since it passed or even before it passed. So I want to underscore today that you should not be stampeded into granting a blanket PTC delay. Address the legitimate peripheral problems, to be sure, but hold the industry’s feet to the fire to implement as much as they can by the statutory deadline, and provide strong evidence of localized problems — to FRA’s satisfaction — that may cause them to miss the deadline on some portions of their system. If you don’t do that, you will reward bad behavior … punnish BNSF and Amtrak for making PTC the economic priority you demanded in 2008 … and dishonor the memory of those who perished in Philadelphia on May 12th.

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That's why the railroad's PTC implementation deadline is December 31, 2015, and within the FRA's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee. So what I'm about to say should come as no surprise to anyone in the industry who has been paying attention.

Our primary concerns are similar to many concerns in America; they are about public safety. Railroads using the camera data punitive against employees. On the privacy issue, engineers and trainmen are all but captives on locomotives for up to 12 hours, with no ability to ever leave the locomotive cab in many cases. Yet, more than 2 years into these discussions, the railroads continue to refuse to even consider shutting the cameras off when trains are stopped. This level of continual surveillance for up to 12 hours — whether the train is moving or stopped — and with no way to ever take even a break from that surveillance is oppressive and un-American. Insofar as punitive use of video data against locomotive engineers and trainmen is concerned, you only need to review what has happened since you last revised Whistleblower protections found in 49 U.S.C. Section 20109 to confirm that many major railroads routinely retaliate against their employees. Our concerns are not with merit.

BLET has also made suggestions both to the freight carriers and to the FRA that the railroad industry follow the cockpit voice recorder model for the aviation industry. That model includes use of data for purposes of federal accident/incident investigation, with privacy protections enacted in law or regulation. It also provides for detailed, collectively bargained conditions on whether, when and how such data is used by a carrier in its own internal processes.

The industry has rejected these good faith proposals out of hand and — in light of the failure by the RSAC to reach consensus on a proposed inward-facing camera regulation — it is apparent that FRA will have to issue a regulation based on its best judgment. I sincerely hope FRA will give appropriate consideration to the legitimate problems we have identified. It is clear to our Organization that the monitoring of our movement on cameras would be better spent installing true lifesaving technology like PTC, which would actually prevent an accident as compared to getting film of that same accident. I expect we will have more for you to consider in the coming months, but felt it was important for you to hear our position directly.

We cannot continue to demand that Amtrak operate a first-class railroad while at the same time funding it at Third World levels. We cannot expect reliable performance from the portions of the Northeast Corridor infrastructure that are 75 ... or 100 ... or 125 years old. And we do not think that we should always nose up at a transportation mode that pays 85% of operating costs out of the farebox because of a retreat by some from the consensus in favor of federal support of transportation that dates back to before my 152-year-old Union was founded. It strains our collective memory to think of a case where we attack a problem by defining it when we want a positive outcome. Programs or institutions that are defunded by Congress are defunded for one reason and one reason alone: so that they wither on the vine and die.

I'm going to resist the urge to climb up on my soapbox here, but I want to stress that the public transportation infrastructure upon which our nation and economy were built over generations is crumbling around our feet ... and that includes Amtrak. Amtrak is a good investment, and a necessary resource. And shortchanging Amtrak creates its own costs elsewhere. I strongly urge you to provide the resources necessary for Amtrak to thrive and grow, and not just to limp along.

Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio, I appreciate the opportunity to address you today. Working together over the years with this Committee — and with the Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee — much has been accomplished to enhance rail safety, and I look forward to working with you to implement the lessons learned from Amtrak 188. Thank you for inviting me to speak, and I will be happy to try to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Dennis R. Pierce
BLET National President

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DAILY BENEFIT

To apply for membership speak with a BR&CFM member in your terminal or visit our web site at www.brcf.org
The National Division’s EUMA Arrangements Committee are planning a convention that you will be able to attend in July. The convention will be held in July at the Ponkapoag Golf Course. For more information, visit the EUMA website or call the hotel at 800-225-0008. The 2015 EUMA begins with registration and a welcome reception on the evening of Sunday, July 26. The opening ceremony, closed meeting for EUMA members and a carriage tour are planned for the next day. The closing reception will be held on Friday, July 28. A limited number of tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Advisory Board February/March 2015 Activity**

In accordance with the Bylaw Rules, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly:

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE:**
- UA/EASTERN Region. UP Eastern Region grievation meetings.
- National Division Office, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
- EUMA Regional Meeting Association, Juneau, AK; LUMS Secretary-Treasurer Class, Tampa, FL;
- UP-Central Region Article 40 (F) negotiations.

**VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF:**
- BLET/Union Pacific Railroad mtg., Omaha, Nebras.
- National Bargaining, Washington, D.C.; National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Pas- senger Train Operations; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Rail Conference Policy Committee mtg.; BLET/UP contract negotiations.

**VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS:**
- Springfield Terminal and D&H joint conference, Las Vegas.
- UP-Southern Region and UP-Western Region joint conference, Las Vegas.

**VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS:**
- Assignments to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Great Western, Texas Pacifico; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Advisory Board mtg., Miami, Fla.; LM-2 Secretary-Treasurer Class, Tampa, FL.; SLB 7655, assisting GC Holdcraft, Chicago; UP grievance mediation, NRAB, Chicago.

**VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER:**
- Assignments to: Jacksonville, Fla.; CSX conference call; Savannah arbitration prep., Jacksonville; PLB 7655, assisting GC Holdcraft, Chicago; BLET/Union Pacific Railroad mtg., Omaha, Nebras.
- National Duties include but not limited to: Director, PAID; Issue: Periodicals Postage PAID at Cleveland, OH.

**POSTMASTER:**
- Address changes to Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET Records Department, 1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

**Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News**

Are you a photographer? The National Division’s Public Relations Department, which produces the News, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their images to the “Photo of the Month” section of the News. If you would like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2635, ext. 248, or you can email him at johnb@bletonline.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer’s policies regarding the use of camera and other electronic devices while on duty.

BOSTON TO HOST BLET FOR FINAL EUMA, JULY 26-30, 2015

On July 27, the 28th annual UEMA golf tournament will be held at the Ponkapog Golf Course. For more information, call the Boston office of the BLET. The BLET Education and Training Department will host several training classes for BLET officers and members on Wednesday, July 26. The 77th annual EUMA will conclude that evening with the EUMA scholarship banquet.