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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4605

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September 6, 2012

Dear Mr. Basham :

Thank you very much for your message concerning retirement benefits for railroad employees. I appreciate your taking the time to express your thoughts on this important matter. I am grateful for the privilege of representing you and serving as a voice for the citizens of Virginia's Fifth District.

I agree with you about the need to protect retirement security programs for all Americans. As you may know, many such programs, like the Railroad Retirement System, are threatened by the fiscal crisis our country faces. The national debt is approaching an astounding \$16 trillion. The irresponsibility of past Congresses has left our nation in dire financial straits by constantly increasing federal spending and generating trillion dollar deficits. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, it is imperative that we put an end to this reckless government spending and change course once and for all.

The House Budget, H. Con. Res. 112, makes a number of reforms that would cut spending, reduce the size and scope of the federal government, and reform unsustainable health and retirement security programs to make them viable for future generations. Tier 1 railroad retirement benefits are designed to mimic Social Security benefits, but, like Social Security, the program risks going into default and must be changed to keep it solvent. Currently, the general federal Treasury is already covering shortfalls in the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund, which will only grow as more railroad workers retire. We must act to fill any gaps and ensure that railroad workers can have a secure and stable retirement. Please be assured that I will show your views every consideration when legislation

pertaining to retirement benefits for railroad employees comes before the U.S. House of Representatives for action.

I hope you will stay connected to our office with updates on the latest news, legislation, and other useful information, by signing up for our e-newsletter on our website, hurt.house.gov . Thank you again for your communication and please do not hesitate to contact our office with any future questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hurt", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Robert Hurt
Member of Congress