

Rail Workers Show Up in Force at Day of Action

The National Mall wasn't the only place in Washington, D.C. where transportation workers made their voices heard. International President Bob Scardelletti joined members from TCU and other Amtrak unions at an early-morning rally at Union Station. The large crowd then made its way to the main Day of Action event at the



National Mall. At both rallies, Scardelletti blasted Amtrak's foot-dragging in contract negotiations and demanded sufficient funding for the nation's passenger rail system.

"It's time to tell Amtrak 'Enough is Enough!' Some crafts are three years without a new contract. Others are over seven years without a contract. Enough is enough," said Scardelletti. "Amtrak is the only company in America that refuses to give its employees a raise for so many years.

"If you want a national train passenger service, you have to pay for it," said

Making themselves heard at the early-morning rally at Union Station on May 17, are, from left, Amtrak Assistant International Representatives Nathan White and Dale Chapman, International Vice President Joel Parker, Assistant International Representative Jack Dinsdale and International Representative Ron Kloos.



Michael Campbell, Page One Photography

TCU President Bob Scardelletti spoke out for rail members at the 2007 Day of Action.

Scardelletti. "You cannot expect rail passenger employees to work for less than other rail workers. The government must provide Amtrak with enough money earmarked for employees' wage increases with full retroactive pay. The time is now. Give us the raises and retroactive pay that each and every Amtrak worker deserves."

Rail Safety Legislation Pending in Congress

Legislation to make rail safety a priority is now moving through Congress. The Railroad Safety and Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 2095) was introduced in the House of Representatives on May 1 by James Oberstar (D-MN) and Corrine Brown (D-FL).

The legislation would overhaul the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) rail safety program and would reorganize the FRA into a

Federal Railroad Safety Administration with safety its highest priority.

The bill would increase substantially the number of qualified inspectors; establish stringent fatigue management programs; strengthen whistleblower protections; establish training standards for all rail workers; and provide new regulations to end intimidation of rail workers who report personal injuries.

"Rail labor has worked closely with members of Congress in developing this legislation and we fully support it," says International Vice President Bob Davis who serves also as TCU's National Legislative Director. "The Railroad Safety and Improvement Act is vital for the safety of rail workers, passengers and communities near the tracks and yards. We must work to see it passed."

Metro-North Members Ratify New Agreement

In late April, members at Metro-North Railroad voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new agreement that is “positive and progressive” and “a testament to the unity of the membership and to the Metro-North Labor Coalition that persevered through four long years of difficult bargaining,” TCU International President Bob Scardelletti announced.

The coalition represents some 3,500 employees at Metro-North, a commuter railroad serving parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Of these, some 800 clerks and 300 supervisors are members of TCU and another 200 are Machinists.

Joel Parker, a TCU international vice president, served as the coalition’s spokesperson.

“Throughout these years, our goal never changed,” said Parker. “We were determined to reach a fair agreement containing the wage increases and improved benefits that our members deserve. Thanks to the membership’s solidarity and resolve, we reached an agreement that is far superior to every previous offer, including the recommendation of Presidential Emergency Board 240.” It includes a \$1,000 bonus, several annual percentage wage increases, no health and welfare employee contributions and several pension and retirement improvements.

“We won a strong agreement because of the unwavering solidarity of the members,” stressed Parker. From System Board 86, he

credits General Chairman Russ Oathout, Vice General Chairman Bill Kelaher, Lodge 227 Local Chairman Paul Constantinople and Lodge 1043 Local Chairman Bill Inness; and from the Supervisors Division, Lodge 5041 General Chairman Bill Mills and International Representative Joe Derillo.

Amtrak Talks Stall, Strike Possible

“Negotiations with Amtrak remain at a standstill,” reports President Bob Scardelletti. It is an “outrage,” he said, that TCU clerks, on-board service workers and product line supervisors have gone without new agreements for two and one-half years and TCU carmen, and mechanical and maintenance of way supervisors have gone without for seven and one-half years.

“Amtrak’s intransigence over the past seven years shows that there is no possibility of reaching fair agreements at the bargaining table,” said Scardelletti, who concluded that it is likely “the only way we will get fair contracts with Amtrak is by striking.” Scardelletti also charged that the National Mediation Board “is making a travesty of the Railway Labor Act by refusing to release us from mediation” despite repeated requests for release. This would start the countdown toward eventual action following the steps mandated by the RLA.

To read his full statement, go to www.tcuunion.org.



AP/World Wide Photos

Metro-North Railroad members ratified a new agreement after standing strong through tough bargaining with the rail carrier.