

Unions Join Forces to Fight Railroads' Greed

When National negotiations with the freight railroads began in January 2005, all of the carriers were healthy — stock prices were high, profits were at record levels and executive compensation was soaring.

TCU and the other rail unions expected the carriers to share their success with the workers who made it possible. Instead, the carriers planned to use their political connections to get radical concessions.

From TCU and the other non-operating crafts the carriers want the ability to contract out without restriction and to seriously weaken existing protective agreements. From the operating crafts they want one-person crews on road service. From every union they want huge increases in employee contributions to health insurance and cutbacks in benefits.

"We have steadfastly told them that there will be no concessionary agreement," says TCU International President Bob Scardelletti.

TCU Clerks and Carmen



AP/Wide World Photos

Rail unions are joining together to fight rail carriers' demands for sweeping concessions despite record profits in the industry.

have been negotiating together with the Machinists, the Electricians and TWU. They are delivering the same message – it's time for the industry to share the wealth.

The unions launched a coordinated campaign to protest the carriers' shameful bargaining strategy by distributing bumper stickers, pictured below, with a clear message: 'The Nation's Railroads – They

Use Us, Then Abuse Us.'

"The bumper stickers carry the logos of all rail unions. That tells the carriers we are working together to win fair and equitable contracts. This show of unity gets us rolling, but this November we must vote to change the political balance of power so the carriers do not have a Congress that does their bidding," says Scardelletti.

The carriers believe they can use their political clout to force concessionary contracts. Vice President Cheney served on the Union Pacific board of directors. The carriers are counting on President Bush to appoint a "non-traditional" Presidential



Emergency Board of pro-business, anti-worker ideologues and a Republican-controlled Congress to impose their partisan recommendations.

“We have the power to derail that strategy. The votes members cast this November are, in essence, an early contract vote,” says Scardelletti.

But no matter what happens in November, we will not give in. The railroads use our members’ skills and hard work to generate their profits – we will not allow them to abuse us at the bargaining table.

Update on Amtrak

The Joint Council of Carmen, Helpers, Coach Cleaners and Apprentices (JCC), which includes TCU’s Carmen Division, formally requested a proffer of arbitration by the National Mediation Board (NMB) in ongoing Amtrak negotiations. A proffer of arbitration, which the parties are not bound to accept, is a key step in moving toward strike action under the Railway Labor Act (RLA).

TCU Carmen and TWU Railroad Division members are bargaining together through the JCC, along with the Machinists and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), both of which also formally requested release from mediation. Under the RLA, the NMB decides whether to hold the parties in mediation or proffer the requested arbitration.

TCU Members’ Votes Can Make a Difference

All elections are important this year, as this issue of the IAM Journal makes clear. For TCU members, here is a look at just a few key strategic campaigns.

Pennsylvania

Senator Rick Santorum is no friend. Do not be misled by his recent statements on rail labor issues and Amtrak in particular. Santorum voted against the amendment to give more money to Amtrak and he was against the improvements in Railroad Retirement that TCU fought so hard to win. This year, in an obvious campaign gimmick, he introduced a bill to keep the payment of Tier II benefits by the Treasury Department. The labor-friendly candidate for Senator is Bob Casey. He deserves your vote this November.

Michigan

Debbie Stabenow has TCU’s support for reelection. Senator Stabenow has a *100 percent* TCU voting record. She is the kind of Senator we can count on to lead the charge



AP/Wide World Photos

Debbie Stabenow

for issues important to TCU members. Stabenow is in a hard fight to retain her seat; she deserves your vote.

Tennessee

Senator Bill Frist, with a *one percent* TCU voting record, is retiring. TCU supports Congressman Harold Ford, Jr.

who is running to win that seat. Ford has a *92 percent* TCU voting record. He has been a staunch advocate for TCU issues and would make a strong TCU supporter in the Senate. The time is now to redouble our efforts to elect Harold Ford, Jr. to the Senate.

Minnesota

We must fight hard to win the seat that Senator Mark Dayton is giving up. The Republican candidate, Mark Kennedy, is not a friend of TCU members. As a House member, Kennedy tried to cripple Amtrak every chance he had. He even tried to cut Amtrak funding by \$100 million (the amendment lost when even 168 Republicans voted against it). TCU supports Amy Klobuchar, Hennepin County Attorney since 1998.

Your vote for union-friendly candidates can make the difference. Together with all of the American labor movement, we can turn the tide in favor of working people.



AP/Wide World Photos

Harold Ford, Jr.