



Photo by Emily Mills

Wisconsin GOP Governor Scott Walker's refusal of federal funds for a high-speed rail system sparked large protests. Some of the grant money may go to Illinois. Walker and other GOP Governors are destroying thousands of jobs by killing rail projects in their states.

Pulling the Wheels Off High-Speed Rail

The new GOP majority in the House of Representatives and many states have made derailing America's investment in high-speed rail systems a top priority.

The Obama administration's high-speed rail program will create jobs and build a strong foundation for an economic recovery.

In Wisconsin, outgoing Democratic Governor Jim Doyle said over 4,700 jobs would be created at the height of construction of a high-speed rail line between Milwaukee and Madison.

Incoming Republican Governor Scott Walker promptly scuttled the \$810 million project, calling it unnecessary and a "victory" for fiscal responsibility.

In Ohio, new Republican Governor John Kasich dismissed high-speed rail advocates as members of a "train cult" and rejected \$400 million in federal money already in the pipeline for a rail



line linking Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati.

Florida GOP Governor Rick Scott refused \$2.4 billion for high-speed rail lines between Tampa

and Orlando, a critical piece of the nationwide network.

The new Chairman of the House Transportation Committee John Mica (R-FL) joined the chorus, calling Amtrak a "Soviet-style train system," while Railroads Subcommittee Chair Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) called high-speed rail projects "insanity."

"This is the 'Party of No' torpedoing any legislation with the potential to turn this recession around," said IAM Transportation General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. "They want to block any public investment on ideological grounds alone, regardless of the jobs that investment would create."

Why Does Rand Paul Hate Flight Attendants?

In the wake of questioning the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and circulating a petition for a National Right-to-Work (for less) law, Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul has further embarrassed himself by trying to single-handedly deny important workplace health and safety protections to the nation's professional Flight Attendants.

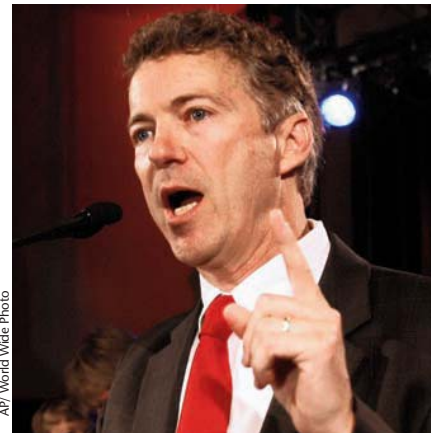
Since 1975, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has held unilateral jurisdiction over workplace safety for Flight Attendants, but has not prescribed or enforced safety and health standards or regulations.

The pending FAA Reauthorization Bill (S.223) will fix that flaw by creating

shared OSHA and FAA jurisdiction over air cabin workplace safety. Senator Paul introduced an amendment to block that fix.

In addition to standards regarding cabin air quality, sanitation, temperature and humidity levels, Flight Attendants are denied OSHA-level guidelines regarding noise and blood-borne pathogens. "Not only does this increase the likelihood of work-related injuries and illnesses for Flight Attendants, but passengers are exposed to the same hazardous conditions," said Robert Sayles, an 11-year ExpressJet Flight Attendant.

After intense lobbying efforts and grassroots



Sen. Rand Paul, (R-KY)

action, including a letter by IAM President Tom Buffenbarger to all U.S. Senators urging them to block Paul's amendment, Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) introduced a motion to block Paul's amendment.

The Democratic majority in the Senate approved Harkin's motion.

New Contract at Alaska Airlines

IAM members under the Clerical, Office and Passenger Service Agreement at Alaska Airlines voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new contract that includes pay raises, a \$1,500 signing bonus, job security provisions and participation in an annual performance-based pay incentive plan.

The incentive plan will provide IAM members at

Alaska Airlines with more than a month's wages for their work in 2010.

The three-year contract covers 2,700 Clerical, Office and Passenger Service workers at the Seattle, WA-based airline. The contract places IAM members at Alaska near the top of the airline industry in pay and benefits, along with long-term job security.

Negotiations between the

IAM and Alaska Airlines began in March 2010 and concluded with a tentative agreement in December 2010.

