



RRB News

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

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President Appoints New Labor Member to Railroad Retirement Board

President Obama has appointed Walter A. Barrows to be the Labor Member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. His appointment was confirmed by the Senate on September 26, and he was sworn into office on October 7. Mr. Barrows' term will expire in August 2014.

Mr. Barrows succeeds V. M. Speakman, Jr. who retired. Mr. Speakman, who had served as the Labor Member since 1992, is the longest-serving Labor Member in the Railroad Retirement Board's history.

At the time of his appointment, Mr. Barrows was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. He was elected to that position in 1999, and reelected in 2002, 2006 and 2010. Since 1999, Mr. Barrows had been a labor member on the joint health care subcommittee that oversees the National Railroad Health and Welfare Plan, and chaired the health care committee for the six unions in the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition in the most recent round of national contract negotiations.

Before being elected Secretary-Treasurer Mr. Barrows served the union in a variety of local and national offices, including General Chairman for the Norfolk Southern General Committee and Grand Lodge Trustee. Since 2004, Mr. Barrows had also been a Trustee of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust, which manages the investment of the more than \$25 billion in trust fund assets used to pay railroad retirement benefits.

Mr. Barrows, 56, is a native of Ohio. He started his railroad career with the Norfolk & Western Railroad in 1974, holding numerous positions within the railroad's signal department. He currently resides in Front Royal, Virginia, with his wife, Linda. They have three grown children.

Headquartered in Chicago, the Railroad Retirement Board provides retirement, survivor, disability, unemployment and sickness benefit payments totaling almost \$11 billion a year to railroad workers and their families under the Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts.

(More)

The agency is managed by a three-member Board comprised of a representative of rail labor, a representative of rail carriers, and a member representing the general public who serves as Chairman. Mr. Barrows' appointment was unanimously supported by 12 different international and national unions which represent employees in the rail industry.

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