

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We are writing to formally request an increase in FY19 appropriated funds for the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). The RRB is a self-funded, independent federal agency that administers retirement-survivor benefits, as well as unemployment and sickness insurance, to over 782,000 active and retired railroad employees across the country.

We request that the Committee appropriate \$19.647 million for IT modernization, in addition to the \$115.225 million requested by the President's budget. The additional \$19.647 million for FY19 IT modernization is in line with the request for an additional \$40 million in no-year funds that was included in the President's recent addendums to the FY18 budget.

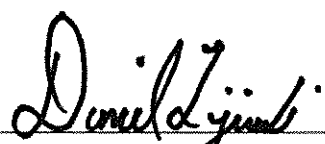
Please note that the increase in appropriations requires no actual funds from the general fund. Rather, this appropriation simply authorizes the RRB to access its own funds from its own trusts in order to finance operations. This includes upgrading its badly outdated information technology infrastructure – a measure that will save the agency money in the long run.

The agency has been challenged by stagnant appropriations levels in recent years, while its antiquated IT systems remain largely unaddressed. The situation is growing more dire every year. Specialized staff are leaving the agency and not being replaced, operations and service levels are diminishing, and the 40-year-old legacy mainframe system remains badly outdated. This is the reality for the Board, despite being self-funded through payroll taxes which are held in trust funds.

Service levels at the agency are declining while the Board is unable to realize cost-efficiencies from basic modern infrastructure upgrades. Today, beneficiaries cannot create or submit online retirement-survivor applications, nor can they update their own personal records. To change passwords, a beneficiary must request a new password on the website and wait ten days to two weeks to receive it in the mail. The Board does not have the ability to do paperless mass-mailings which results in the Board's annual spending of \$1.6 million on postage and \$300,000 on paper – nearly two percent of their annual budget. The Board also lacks the ability to host a virtual library that would provide easier access to various forms and letters.

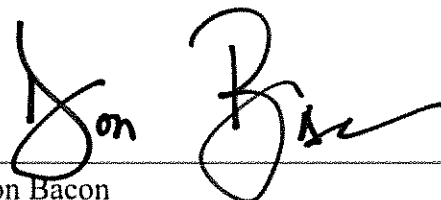
We understand the many constraints you face during the appropriations process, and the tough decisions that have to be made in order to meet budgetary caps and restrictions. However, we believe the relatively modest increase in funding for the Railroad Retirement Board is a fiscally sound investment that will improve services for our nation's active and retired railroaders.

We therefore request that you fully fund the Railroad Retirement Board at the level requested in the President's FY19 budget, \$115.225 million, with an additional \$19.647 million in funding for IT modernization purposes. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Jonathon Freye in Rep. Lipinski's office at jonathon.freye@mail.house.gov, or Jeff Kratz in Rep. Bacon's office at jeff.kratz@mail.house.gov.

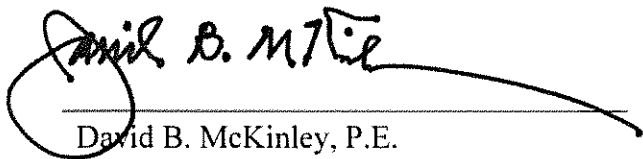


Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress

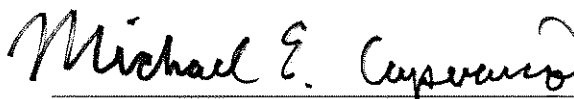
Sincerely,



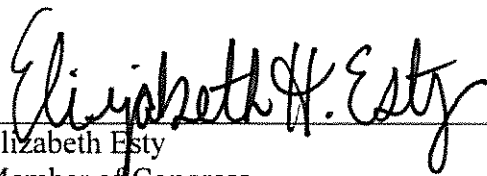
Don Bacon
Member of Congress



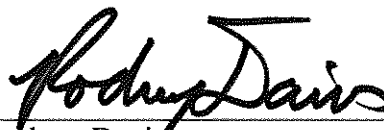
David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



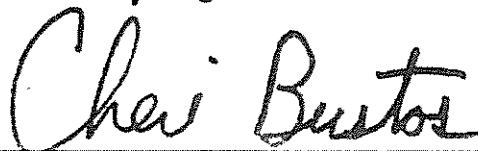
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



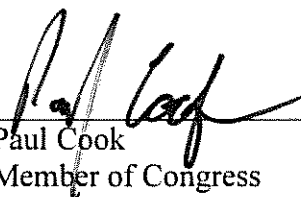
Elizabeth Esty
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



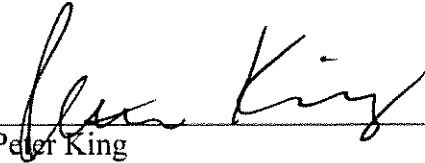
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



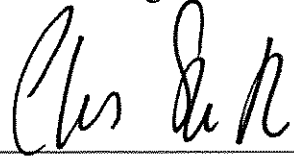
John J. Faso
Member of Congress



Peter King
Member of Congress



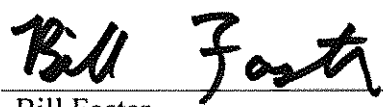
Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
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Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



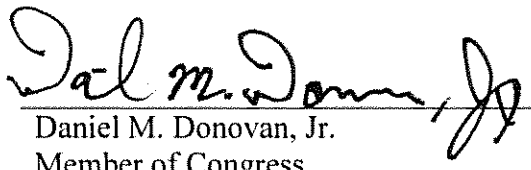
Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



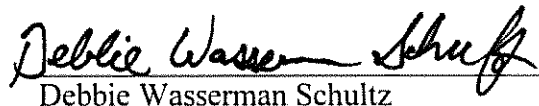
Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



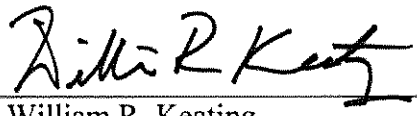
Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress



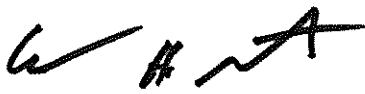
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Andy Barr
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



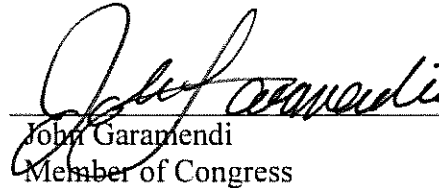
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress



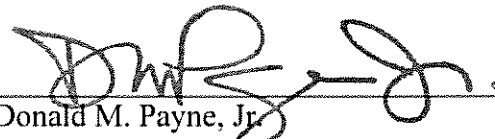
Albio Sires
Member of Congress



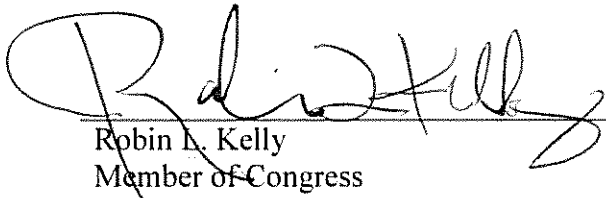
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



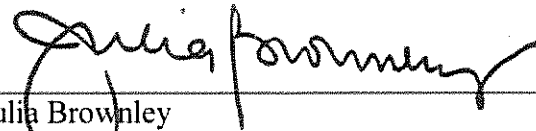
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



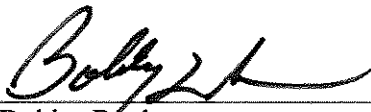
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



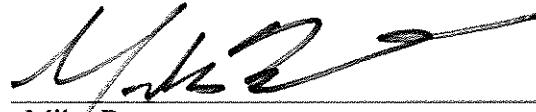
Richard Nolan
Member of Congress



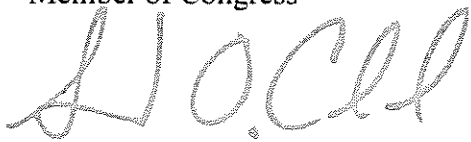
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



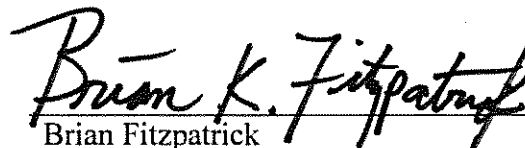
Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress