



# Transportation Communications Union / Int. Assoc. of Machinists & Aerospace Workers (TCU/IAM)



## Federal Government Must Investigate Precision-Scheduled Railroading (PSR)

**Position:** The railroad workers of the Machinists District 19 and the Transportation Communications Union (TCU/IAM) have grave concerns regarding the safety implications and commercial impact of so-called Precision-Scheduled Railroading (PSR), an operating model that is sweeping the Class 1 freight rail industry.

This “new” operating model is indeed not new; rather, the PSR model is an excuse to reduce headcounts to unsafe levels, work employees harder and longer causing greater fatigue, and bully or outright eliminate service for shippers and customers. **Congress, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Surface Transportation Board (STB) MUST provide greater scrutiny of this operating model.**

Labor unions are not in the business of dictating how our employers operate; however, when those operations cause safety to be compromised, unions have a duty to our members and the general public to convey our concerns, and raise public awareness.

### Further Reading:

- [“As CSX workforce shrinks, accidents pile up and morale plummets” \*Jacksonville Business Journal\*, 2/14/18.](#)
- [“Beware the operating ratio trap” \*Railway Age\*, 2/11/19](#)
- [“PSR: Short-term gains, but at what cost?” \*Railway Age\*, 4/21/19](#)

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## Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) Funding

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is an independent federal agency that administers retirement, survivor, disability, and unemployment-sickness insurance benefit programs to over 753,000 beneficiaries in every state and every congressional district. The RRB’s operations are self-funded through its own respective trusts, and do not require any dollars from the general revenue fund. However, the RRB still requires an appropriation from Congress to access those funds.

**Underfunded and Outdated:** The RRB itself has been woefully underfunded for decades, despite its self-funding nature. Staffing levels have decreased, and the agency’s aging information technology (IT) system remains badly outdated. Currently, the RRB’s IT services run on a *40-year-old legacy mainframe system*. Basic modern services like password changes and address updates are impossible. The inefficiency of the system requires staff to devote significant time to paper-based servicing, while similar industry practices utilize digitized platforms. The RRB estimates the total cost of overhauling the IT system will be \$42.5 million. Recognizing the need for these upgrades, Congress appropriated \$10 million in no-year funds in both FY18 and FY19 spending bills (\$20 million total).

**Funding Request:** The Association of American Railroads (AAR) and the Rail Labor Division (RLD) – which includes TCU and IAM – have **jointly requested that Congress fully fund the RRB at \$137.216 million in the FY2020 LHHS appropriations bill**. This figure includes adequate funding for staffing levels to fulfill the agency’s core missions as well as \$11.861 million in no-year funding for the IT modernization.