



**American  
Public Transportation  
Association**

May 9, 2024

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**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

Paul P. Skoutelas

The Honorable Deb Fischer  
U.S. Senate  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
U.S. Senate  
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Fischer and Senator Klobuchar,

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), which represents the \$79 billion public transportation industry that provides mobility for millions of Americans each year, directly employs 430,000 people, and supports millions of private-sector jobs, **I write to express our support for S. 1274, the Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness Act (REEF Act), and to urge its swift passage.**

Commuter and intercity passenger railroad workers, together with their freight rail counterparts, play a vital role in boosting the national economy and ensuring the safety of travelers. Despite their hard work, railroad workers remain the only workforce that has its unemployment and sickness benefits diminished by sequestration cuts.

The cuts have a major impact on workers and their families. The current biweekly maximum claim for railroad workers is \$870. Applying the current sequestration cut of 5.7 percent results in a maximum claim decreasing to \$820.41, meaning railroad workers can lose almost \$50 from each unemployment or sickness insurance claim. For a rail worker who has been laid off or forced to drop out of the work force due to illness, the additional money can make a huge difference.

APTA was pleased to see Congress temporarily eliminate this unnecessary hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency expired on May 11, 2023, and sequestration cuts have resumed. We believe the bipartisan REEF Act offers a direct solution to permanently fix this issue for railroad workers. APTA members are grateful for your leadership on this legislation.

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The Honorable Deb Fischer and the Honorable Amy Klobuchar

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While the Congressional Budget Office estimates that enacting the REEF Act would increase direct spending by \$67 million over 10 years, this increased spending would be entirely paid for by payroll taxes on railroad employers. Moreover, despite the potential of this increased spending to lead to a payroll surtax on railroad agencies, including commuter and intercity passenger railroads, APTA members support the bill and believe that rail workers are entitled to full unemployment and sickness benefits.

Thank you for your leadership on ensuring railroad workers receive their full benefits and we urge Congress to swiftly pass the REEF Act.

Sincerely,



Paul P. Skoutelas  
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Chairman, Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Jodey C. Arrington, Chairman, Committee on the Budget,  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brendan F. Boyle, Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget,  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Janice D. Schakowsky, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brian K. Fitzpatrick, U.S. House of Representatives