

BMWED

BROTHERHOOD OF MAINTENANCE OF WAY EMPLOYEES DIVISION
Of The International Brotherhood Of Teamsters

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Brotherhood Intensifies Efforts to Save Amtrak

The BMWED, with the support of the Teamsters Rail Conference and other elements of Rail Labor, has intensified its efforts to save Amtrak from being led into bankruptcy by the Amtrak Board of Directors and the Bush Administration. Under the direction of President Freddie Simpson, the BMWED Director of Government Affairs in cooperation with the IBT Government Affairs and Communications Departments, has developed a strategic plan to raise public awareness and political pressure to save Amtrak. In addition to activating a number of BMWED State Legislative Directors to lobby Capitol Hill and visit Congressmen in their home districts, President Simpson has also assigned Vice Presidents Rick Wehrli and Henry Wise to help coordinate this union-wide effort.

On March 30, 2005 BMWED and BLET members were joined by fellow Teamsters in Solana Beach and Needles, California to distribute flyers to Amtrak passengers and the public to highlight Amtrak's potential bankruptcy should the Bush Administration's zero funding proposal become law. The California flyers asked passengers to contact their Congressional Representatives, Duke Cunningham (R-CA) and Jerry Lewis (R-CA), to request full funding for Amtrak. Both Representatives Cunningham and Lewis are members of the House Appropriations Committee that will ultimately decide Amtrak funding levels. If Amtrak were to go under, thousands of union jobs would be lost and 25 million annual Amtrak riders would be forced onto our nation's over-congested highways.

During the week of April 25, 15 BMWED Legislative Directors, System Officers, and Vice Presidents descended upon Capitol Hill to lobby for a clean mark-up in the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee on H-1630 (Amtrak) and H-1631 (Ride-21). Their efforts were joined by members and staff of the BLET and other Teamsters in a week-long lobbying blitz in Washington, DC.

On Wednesday, April 27, 2005 the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee marked up (voted) by voice vote HR 1630, which re-autho-

rizes \$2 billion per year for FY 2006 through FY 2008 for Amtrak. Currently HR 1630 has 42 cosponsors. Rail Labor's efforts to get a clean mark-up of the Amtrak bill was not easy, as there were 83 Republican members of the House that had to be lobbied to prevent harmful amendments from being attached to the bill. These efforts were ultimately successful, and as a result there are no anti-labor provisions in the bill, such as those recently proposed by Amtrak President David Gunn to reduce Amtrak employment, remove new hires from Railroad Retirement, eliminate coverage of FELA, and remove Amtrak from under the Railway Labor Act. The Committee also marked up HR 1631, the High Speed Rail Act which would provide \$60 billion over a ten year period for the development of high speed rail. Both of these bills now go to the Subcommittee on Transportation/Treasury of the House Appropriations Committee.

The following day, on the morning of April, 28 at the height of Washington, D.C.'s rush hour BMWED, BLET, and fellow Teamster members from IBT DC Local #639, joined together with other IBT members and staff to distribute over 3000 flyers to Amtrak passengers at Union Station, Washington. The flyers highlighted the financial and economic impact that losing Amtrak will have on Washington, DC and the entire Northeast Corridor. Similar events will be conducted all across the Amtrak system to highlight the threat the Bush Administration poses to Amtrak and rail passenger service.

Nearly 20,000 dedicated employees have done everything humanly possible to keep Amtrak running safely on a shoe string budget since 1976. BMWED members at Amtrak are paid below the national freight average and have been working without a contract for over 5 years. The President's latest proposal to kill Amtrak is an insult to the proud men and women who make Amtrak run each and every day. It is also an insult to the 25 million annual Amtrak riders who would be forced onto our over-congested highways because of the President's ill-conceived plan to bankrupt Amtrak and

liquidate its assets. Furthermore, an Amtrak liquidation as proposed by President Bush would have a devastating impact on the Railroad Retirement System. Amtrak employees make up approximately 10% of the contributors into the Railroad Retirement system. Should they be forced out of the system through bankruptcy or privatization, thousands of rail workers on the freight and commuter side would see retirement, disability, widow, widower, and unemployment benefits threatened and employers and employees would see payroll taxes soar.

President Freddie Simpson said, "If Bush and this Congress allow Amtrak to go into bankruptcy and cease operations, it will be close to impossible to restart service. You can't simply run a railroad, particularly a high speed passenger system, like you do a convenience store. Once Amtrak's highly skilled and specialized employees are abandoned in this ill-conceived bankruptcy plan and find alternative employment, they will be lost to the industry. President Bush needs to understand that if he kills Amtrak, it will be virtually impossible to restart it once the employees are gone and the rolling stock is sold off by Amtrak's creditors. With hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer funds spent annually on highways and airports, Amtrak's minuscule subsidy is truly a

national bargain. President Bush has not called for an end to billions of dollars in highway and airline subsidies, nor should he. Neither should he be calling for an end to subsidies for our national rail passenger service which provides vital economic and national security benefits to the entire nation."

President Simpson thanked all the members and officers who mobilized to assist with the distribution of flyers in California, Washington, DC and at other locations along the Amtrak system. "I obviously can't mention each and every one by name, but I do want to thank all those who took part in helping publicize the fight to save Amtrak. I also want to thank the members and officers of the BLET and IBT, including IBT Local #639 for their assistance. The membership is the backbone of our union, and without the members' active involvement we could not be successful," said Simpson.

The fight to save Amtrak is far from over and we fully expect the Bush Administration to continue its attacks and pursue its agenda to kill Amtrak. To be successful, we need your help and the help of everyone else who has a stake in the future of Amtrak and the service it provides. To find out more about what you can do to help save Amtrak, please visit our website at www.bmwe.org and click on "Amtrak Grass Roots Lobbying Tools."



BMWED members leaflet Amtrak passengers, Union Station-Washington, D.C.



Why Rail Workers Should Care About the Fight Over Social Security

As you are all aware, the future solvency and structure of the social security system has become a major issue in the media and in the federal government. Various proposals to restructure the system have been made and the intensity of this national debate will undoubtedly increase during these coming months. Many of you have already been asking and hearing questions as to if and how any changes to social security benefits affect railroad retirement.

The impact changes to social security law have on the railroad retirement system can be summarized in a single general statement—tier 1 railroad retirement benefits are calculated in the same manner as social security benefits. Although differences in eligibility and early retirement may exist, any changes in social security benefit structure or financing will directly affect railroad retirement.

Under the two-tier system provided by the Railroad Retirement Act, tier 1 railroad retirement benefits and their funding are interrelated and coordinated with the benefits and funding provided under the Social Security

Act. While tier 2 railroad retirement benefits and their funding are generally determined by rail labor and management bargaining agreements, tier 1 benefits are basically social security benefits. Fundamental changes in the social security system consequently affect tier 1 benefits as well as tier 1 payroll taxes on rail employees and employers. Railroad workers and their families; therefore have a direct and vital interest in any future changes made to the social security system.

Background

Financing—The vast majority of tier 1 benefits are funded through a financial interchange with the social security trust funds. As part of this financial interchange, the tier 1 payroll tax rates for railroad employees and employers are the same as the rates by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) for social security purposes, and the annual amounts of railroad compensation subject to the tier 1 tax are the same as the amounts under social security. Any changes to the social security tax rate and/or the amount of compensation subject to tax

automatically apply to the railroad retirement tier 1 payroll tax.

Computation of Benefits—Tier 1 benefits are based on an employee's combined railroad retirement and social security credits and are computed under Social Security Act benefit formulas. Any change in the computation of benefits under the Social Security Act or in the amounts of creditable earnings used in computation will carry over to the Railroad Retirement Act and apply to the computation of tier 1 benefits.

COLA's—The Social Security Act provisions that determine social security COLA's on the basis of the Consumer Price Index also determine corresponding increases in both tier 1 and tier 2 benefits. Changes in social security COLA provisions will directly affect the amount of future railroad retirement COLA's.

Age Requirements and other Definitions—Except for individuals who have 30 years of service, retirement age is referenced in the Railroad Retirement Act as being the same as the definition of retirement age in the Social Security Act. Determining who is a widow, widower, child, divorced wife or husband of a railroad employee for railroad retirement benefit purposes is also based on the definitions of those terms in the Social Security Act. Disabled railroaders needing to qualify for Medicare coverage prior to age 65 must meet the definitions of disability contained in the Social Security Act. Changes in any of these social security provisions would directly affect qualifying conditions for railroad retirement benefits.

Social Security Restructuring Proposals

Many proposals have been advanced for addressing the future financing needs of social security. They include changes in revenues as well as in benefits and many of the proposals include a combination of the two. There have also been different proposals to restructure social security by creating either mandatory or voluntary investment accounts that would supplement or replace part of the current social security system. The proposals incorporating individual investment accounts are the ones that have gotten the most attention recently and are favored by the Bush Administration. They involve a privatization or semi-privatization of the system and a switch, in part, from the current defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan.

The President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security, in its 2001 report, presented three models for modifying social security. Each of the three models includes provisions for voluntary individual accounts and associated offsets to social security retirement benefits based on the earn-

ings of the workers who elect to have such individual accounts. The second and third models would also make modifications to some current social security benefit provisions.

In the first model developed by the Commission, the current benefit provisions of the Social Security Act would not be changed. However, workers would voluntarily invest 2 percent of their taxable earnings in an individual account.

The second model would allow workers to direct 4 percent of their taxable earnings into an individual account, up to an annually indexed maximum (set at \$1,000 in 2002).

The third model would allow workers to have an amount equal to 2.5 percent of their taxable earnings, up to an annually indexed maximum (set at \$1,000 in 2002), deposited annually in an individual account. Participation in this option would require that the worker contribute an additional 1 percent of taxable earnings to the individual account each year.

The foregoing is only meant to provide a brief summary of the Commission's proposals. The entire report of the Commission is available on their web site at www.csss.gov. An actuarial analysis of the 3 models is available on social security's web site at www.ssa.gov/OACT/solvency/PresComm_2002131.html.

Other methods involve reducing benefits by changing the calculation of benefits, reducing COLA increases, and in numerous other ways limiting benefits. Some of the methods that have been suggested for addressing the future financing of social security include:

- Reducing social security COLA's by revising the way the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is calculated. Last year the COLA was 2.7 percent.
 - Reducing benefits by increasing the number of years used in calculating social security benefits from 35 to 38 years.
 - Reducing benefits by modifying the benefit formula used to initially calculate social security benefits by lowering the percentage of earnings that is replaced by benefits.
 - Speeding up the increase in "full retirement age" that is already happening under current law or increasing full retirement age beyond the currently scheduled age 67.
 - Reducing or eliminating benefits for workers with higher incomes by introducing a "means" test for beneficiaries.
 - Raising social security payroll tax rates.
 - Increasing the portion of social security benefits subject to Federal income tax.
 - Increasing the amount of earnings subject to the social security payroll tax.
 - Extending social security cover-
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Around the Brotherhood

Rail Unions Honor Fallen Members

In observation of Workers' Memorial Day, 22 IBT Rail Conference members from the BMWED and BLET joined with approximately 75 other unionists from around the country to honor workers killed in on the job accidents. The Worker Memorial Day ceremony was held in conjunction with the Rail Workers Hazardous Material Training Program at the National Labor College/George Meany Center in Silver Spring, MD.

Participants from seven rail unions joined with other unionists from a variety of industries in a candlelight vigil to remember and honor friends and co-workers who lost their lives in the line of duty. The names of fallen workers were uttered one-by-one during the solemn ceremony, and many rail participants paused to express their personal tributes in honor of their fallen Brothers and Sisters. The solemn and moving ceremony concluded with a prayer for the deceased and a hymn sung by one of the participants. There were few dry eyes in the house, and those in attendance vowed to continue the fight for on the job safety.

Each year in the U.S., approximately 6,000 workers are killed at work, 50,000 die from occupational illnesses, and millions more are injured. During 2004, 24 U.S. railroad workers were killed on duty, including 3 fatalities in maintenance of way and structures. Another 5,594 rail workers suffered reportable injuries, including 1,273 employed in maintenance of way and structures. These on-duty fatalities/injuries do not include an undetermined number of rail employees who suffer or have succumbed to railroad-related occupational illnesses and disease during 2004.

In addition to rail employee fatalities, 872 people (non-railroad employees) were killed in rail accidents/incidents during 2004, including 366 fatalities at highway rail grade crossings, and another 506 fatalities suffered by those classified as "trespassers and non-trespassers."

In his Worker Memorial Day statement, President Freddie Simpson said, "We can honor the victims of workplace death and injury by holding employers accountable for workplace safety and health. The IBT Rail Conference and its members will continue to fight for meaningful rail safety protection laws, and demand aggressive enforcement of existing laws. As a unionist, we reaffirm that nothing is more important than assuring a workplace free of hazards so that our members can return home from the railroad in the same condition as when they left."

Workers Memorial Day is observed each April 28 all around the world.

Union Pacific's Lost Car Contest

The Union Pacific, in a railroad version of the popular kid's game "Where's Waldo," has launched a new program to help find rail cars that have been lost on the vast UP rail system. Union Pacific employees have been alerted by the company to help locate these lost cars, and if an employee provides information that results in actual movement of a lost car to its intended destination, the reporting employee will be rewarded with a gift box of steaks (or equivalent gift certificate) in recognition. Union Pacific has established a toll free "Lost Car Hot Line" for employees and has published a list of car numbers and last known locations. Let's hope that the gift boxes of steak are not also being shipped via Union Pacific!

BMWED Members Avert School Bus Tragedy

On March 14, 2005 the quick reaction of four BMWED members averted a potential disaster involving a school bus fouling the CSX main line on the Mountain Sub in Terra Alta, West Virginia. At approximately 2:30 P.M., four BMWED members, Track Foreman Lonnie Moats, Truck Driver Earl Moreland, Welder Galin Shahan, and Welder Helper Jerry Isner noticed a

school bus stuck in deep snow dangerously close to the main line. Unaware that a fast moving freight train was approaching the location of the stuck bus, the bus driver was still trying to work the truck free when the track crew arrived.

Foreman Moats had been in recent radio communication with a nearby freight train, and knew that it would soon arrive at the location of the bus. Fearing there were children on the bus, Brother Moats took immediate action. He called the locomotive engineer of the approaching train and advised him to stop his train. While Brother Moats was on the radio with the locomotive engineer, Brother Moreland began blowing the truck horn. Brothers Shahan and Isner jumped from the truck and began waving the driver away from the school bus, knowing they were too far away to reach him before the train rounded the curve. The bus driver soon recognized the track crew's frantic attempts to get his attention and he moved away from the track just as the train came around the curve.

The train miraculously stopped just a few feet short from the empty school bus. All involved were thankful that a disaster was averted and no one was injured. The engineer later stated that he doubted if he would have been able to see the bus and stop in time had it not been for the quick and decisive action of Foremen Moats and his crew. After regaining his composure, the bus driver expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the workers and thanked God no one was hurt or killed.

Once again, the professionalism and dedication of BMWED members saved the day and averted a near tragedy. The BMWED is extremely proud of Brothers Moats, Moreland, Shahan, and Isner whose actions and bravery exemplify the character, selflessness, and skill of BMWED members nationwide. Congratulations on a job well done!

Shareholder Sues 12 Union Pacific Directors

A shareholder of Union Pacific has sued 12 Union Pacific Directors for their management of the railroad and their handling of a number of rail accidents and incidents that cost the railroad hundreds of millions of dollars. Investor David Jaroslawicz sued the 12 Directors claiming they violated their responsibility to act in the best interest of the corporation. In the lawsuit filed in a Utah court in early April 2005, Jaroslawicz's suit claims that the Union Pacific Railroad, under the management of the 12 Directors of the Board, has repeatedly failed FRA and DOT inspections, violated safety laws and regulations, intimidated workers, and covered up or destroyed

evidence related to grade crossing accidents. Over an 8 year span (1997 - 2004), there were approximately 5,030 grade crossing accidents on the U.P. which resulted in hundreds of fatalities.

The Union Pacific Directors are accused in the suit of running an unsafe operation and ignoring safety problems that led to railroad accidents costing the company hundreds of millions of dollars in damages and clean-up costs. Union Pacific has reportedly spent over \$103 million related to just one derailment in Eunice, LA in 2002. This track-caused derailment was attributed to broken joint bars. Subsequent inspections found hundreds of other track defects, leading the National Transportation Safety Board to blame the Eunice accident on "uncorrected defects because of the Union Pacific Railroad's ineffective track inspection procedures and inadequate management oversight." Eunice, LA was one of several accident/incidents referenced in the lawsuit.

Transportation Labor Calls for Resignation of Amtrak Board

The Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO called for the immediate resignation of the Amtrak Board of Director to prevent them from killing Amtrak from within through destructive privatization initiatives. The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), represents millions of transportation workers nationwide including the vast majority of Amtrak's 20,000 employees.

"The Board has clearly violated its fiduciary responsibilities by unveiling legislative reforms on Capitol Hill designed to destroy the very company it has a duty to preserve," said TTD President Edward Wytkind, following a teleconference with rail union leaders and Amtrak Chairman of the Board David Laney and CEO David Gunn. "These Board members - heavy contributors to the Bush campaign - should be responsible and independent, not hand maidens to the President. Having failed the test of independence, they should resign to save Amtrak from itself and from the Bush Administration."

BMWED and other transportation unions also called on Congress to reject the Board's proposal directed at Amtrak employees including calls for direct congressional interference in labor-management negotiations at Amtrak and for repeal of pension, disability, unemployment, survivor, and worker injury protections for thousands of Amtrak employees.

"The Board's attempt to make scapegoats out of Amtrak employees is unconscionable and to no one's surprise borrows a page out of this Administration's anti-labor handbook," See **Brotherhood** on Page 7

Per a U.S. Federal Court Agreement, the BMWED continues preparations for the conduct of nominations and election of the National Division President and Secretary Treasurer under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards. The process, which is going to be conducted by mail, is expected to be completed within the next several months. Article 1, Section 4 of the BMWED Bylaws provides that every bona fide candidate for National Division office may supply the National Division with a picture and a brief campaign announce-

ment of 250 words or less to be published in the BMWED Journal. Submissions for publication must be received by the National Division in care of Bill Hildenbrand no later than 4:30 pm (EST) on July 1, 2005, for publication in the July/August 2005 issue. Questions related to the upcoming election should be directed to Bill Hildenbrand phone: 248/948-1010, Ext. 602 at the National Division or to the U.S. Dept. of Labor Election Supervisor, Michael Purcell at 313/226-6200. Interested members can receive a copy of the election rules from either of the aforementioned individuals.



Freddie N. Simpson

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

As this edition of the Journal went to press, the BMWED and the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC) were preparing for bargaining with the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC), the collective bargaining agent for the Class I Railroads engaged in national handling. The NCCC and RLBC agreed to 3 days of bargaining to be held on May 18, 19 and 20, and they also agreed to some ground rules to govern this round of national bargaining. No one doubts this will be a difficult round; however the RLBC has been meeting regularly to compile data and develop our joint strategies. As reported in an earlier edition of the Journal, the RLBC is a coalition of seven unions

bargaining together in this round of national handling. The member unions of the RLBC have signed a legally binding coalition agreement that unites us in this round, and no member union of the RLBC can cut a separate deal without the concurrence of all the member unions of the coalition.

Coalition bargaining is not new to the railroad industry. The carriers have been doing it for many years through their bargaining coalition, the NCCC. What is different about this round of negotiation is that seven rail unions, with the help and assistance of IBT, have agreed to join together within the RLBC and bargain this round as a united Rail Labor coalition.

The NCCC coalition prevents any carrier member within their coalition from settling with one or more rail unions without the express consent and concurrence of the other carriers who make up the NCCC. In this manner, the NCCC has in the past been successful in targeting a single rail union, using divide and conquer strategies to gain a substandard agreement with that single union, and

then forcing that substandard agreement as the "pattern" upon the rest of the individual rail unions.

However, that was before the establishment of the RLBC. United in the RLBC, the seven rail unions have banded together within a structure which allows us to stand united and fight fire with fire. The RLBC understands that an injury to one is an injury to all, and we have agreed to stand together for the mutual protection and benefit of our collective membership.

We have taken a similar, but not identical, course of action with regard to uniting Rail Labor in the fight for Amtrak funding and Amtrak's very survival. An Amtrak Task Force has been formed by AFL-CIO Rail Affiliates to coordinate our joint efforts in the Amtrak fight. Each rail union in the Task Force has volunteered to coordinate mobilization in states targeted for specific action. As reported elsewhere in this edition of the Journal, we have mounted a coordinated

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Message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Amtrak: An Essential Transportation Mode

Amtrak is an essential transportation mode for thousands of people across the country. In some towns, Amtrak is the only way for people to get to major metropolitan areas, and the Amtrak lines have lessened highway traffic in many large cities. The Teamsters Rail Conference is committed to seeking a long term funding solution for Amtrak, as opposed to the yearly struggles for survival funding we have experienced. Now with President Bush's zero-funding proposal, the future of Amtrak appears to be in greater jeopardy than ever. It is a shame that the White House is so out of touch with the needs of the general public. We deserve a safe, reliable and affordable way to reach major metropolitan areas, or even take vacations.

Our Amtrak members deserve a good contract. As you know, for the past five years both your Amtrak BMWED brothers and sisters and the members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen have been working without a contract. This is due to the refusal of Amtrak's chief negotiator to bargain. We support the Transportation Trades Division's

Amtrak task force and the work of our BMWED/BLET Amtrak task force in exploring ways to get negotiations moving again.

Security Still Being Overlooked

Despite it being over year since the bombing in Madrid the rail carriers and the Department of Homeland Security have yet to implement security measures that will prevent a terrorist attack on the rails. Trespassers daily access rail yards and equipment – putting the public and our members in danger.

The Teamsters Rail Conference has heard that the carriers have developed plans for terrorism prevention, but to date our members have not received appropriate training. Our members deserve to have evacuation training, hazardous materials handling training and reliable communication tools. The installation of video cameras or other technical devices themselves is not the answer. No device can replace the trained eyes and ears of a dedicated railroad employee.

I recently appointed John Murphy as the director of the Teamsters Rail Conference. Brother Murphy, also a Teamsters International Vice President, spent countless hours at member

meetings throughout the country in preparation for the BMWED and BLET merger proposals. He continues to provide leadership and direction as part of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition and he is committed to bringing Teamster

unity, power and strength to all of our rail members.

In Solidarity,
James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President



SECRETARY - TREASURER'S REPORT

There are a number of key policy matters over which I disagree with the White House and the bureaucrats in Washington, DC. However, I have to admit that I wholeheartedly agree with President Bush when he



Perry K. Geller, Sr.

says this country is facing an imminent crisis which threatens the security and income of millions of American families in the years ahead.

I also agree with the President that this looming national crisis, if left unchecked, will adversely affect virtually every American citizen, young and old alike. Our nation and its citizens are facing an imminent crisis, and the failure of our government to act decisively and with resolve will have long term ramifications on our economic and national health.

Of course, I am talking about America's looming health care crisis. While Social Security has received the bulk of the Administration's and the media's attention, Social Security continues to remain a solvent and successful program facing no imminent danger of collapse. Our nation's health care system, however, is on life support and in need of dire reform right now.

Today, over 45 million Americans have no health insurance, including more than 8 million children. Government data and independent research compiled by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving health care, indicates that almost half (49%) of uninsured adults with chronic conditions

forgo needed health care or prescription drugs due to cost, leaving them at serious risk of increased health problems. Delayed medical treatment of the chronically ill actually increases the overall societal costs associated with treating more severe medical conditions. This in turn, places additional burdens on an already over-burdened health care system. "Poll after poll shows that the American people want our leaders to make affordable and stable health coverage for all Americans a top priority. Despite popular support for action on health coverage, our leaders have yet to truly focus on solving this problem." (CovertheUninsuredWeek.org, press release, May 2, 2005)

Our nation's health care crisis can be at least partially linked to unfair trade agreements and the loss of millions of U.S. jobs to overseas labor markets. Traditionally, health care coverage in the United States has been employer based, meaning that jobs with employer-provide health care coverage have traditionally been available to most American workers. However, fewer and fewer jobs today provide health care, and many of those that do require substantial employee contributions, higher deductibles, greater out-of-pocket expense, and less quality of care for the insured. According to estimates developed by the Kaiser Family Foundation, "In 2004 there were at least five million fewer jobs with health insurance than in 2001. And health care costs have become a major burden on those businesses that continue to provide insurance coverage: General Motors now spends about \$1,500 on health care for every car it produces." (New York Times, April 11, 2005).

Rail workers, like the shrinking number of other workers who receive collectively bargained employer-provided health insurance, are paying a larger share of their wages toward health care contributions and non-covered medical expenses. Employers too are feeling the sting of increasing health care premiums which continue to rise faster than the rate of inflation. What this means to workers is employers have less money to put toward wage increases and other

needed investments. It also means that workers will continue to be saddled with the double burden of substandard wages and higher out-of-pocket costs for health care. This vicious downward spiral must be addressed before the entire health care system collapses.

We undoubtedly have a health care crisis in America. But we also have a leadership crisis in America. What America needs right now is for our elected officials to focus on this imminent crisis and take decisive action to address the serious illness that has befallen our health care system. This is a national problem that requires a comprehensive national solution. It can not be remedied

PERSPECTIVE Continued from Page 4

political and public awareness campaign to save Amtrak and assure fairness and just treatment for our Amtrak members. These efforts will increase both in number and intensity, and I ask each and every member from all areas of the Brotherhood, freight and passenger employees alike, to join us in this important fight to save Amtrak.

Of course, the lives and livelihoods of our Amtrak members hang in the balance in the face of President Bush's zero funding proposal for Amtrak. But our members on the freight and commuter side also have a major stake in what happens to Amtrak. An Amtrak bankruptcy will have a huge impact on freight railroad employees. Maintenance of tracks, stations, and related infrastructure on the freight railroads would be substantially reduced should Amtrak cease operations. Freight railroads might no longer find it necessary or advisable to maintain their trackage at FRA Track Classes 4 and 5, or higher. They may simply decide to lower the FRA Track Class and run their freight trains at lower speeds. This would mean less work for BMWED members nationwide. Economics, or more precisely shareholder economics, drive the railroad industry. And if the freight railroads are no longer receiving money from Amtrak for trackage rights or receiving subsidiary state funds to improve Amtrak services in the state, the carrier shareholders will demand further cuts in railroad employment and employee benefits to reduce operating expense and bolster share prices.

In addition, freight railroads could become solely responsible for all damages to third parties arising out of Amtrak's pre-bankruptcy operations outside the Northeast Corridor and for increased Railroad Retirement liabilities. More than 200,000 freight and commuter rail workers could see their payroll taxes go up significantly with 20,000 Amtrak employees, and Amtrak itself, no longer paying into the Railroad Retirement system.

solely at the bargaining table. The current system of health care in America and its delivery and funding mechanisms are unsustainable. The American health care system can no longer be treated with simple band-aids and ointment, it needs major reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation.

Please join me in calling on the Bush Administration and the Washington bureaucrats to end their attacks on Social Security and instead focus on addressing the true crisis facing American families. Continued political inaction on our nation's health care crisis is not a viable option, but it is surely enough to make you sick.

Without Amtrak and its workers paying into the system, the Railroad Retirement Unemployment cash reserve account could be exhausted within just a few short years. Some actuaries estimate that Railroad Retirement taxes would have to be raised from 16% to 27% in order to make up for the loss of Amtrak and its workforce from the Railroad Retirement system.

We can not allow the Bush Administration to dismantle and destroy Amtrak. The demise of Amtrak would be devastating for Rail Labor, the 25 million annual Amtrak riders, and the hundreds of towns across America that depend on Amtrak as their sole means of public transportation. And no Amtrak employee in the Northeast Corridor, the only major trackage actually owned and operated solely by Amtrak, should be lulled into believing that they are safe because of the necessity of preserving passenger rail service in the heavily congested Northeast Corridor (NEC). Yes, should Amtrak go into bankruptcy, someone will likely operate trains in the NEC. However, there have been absolutely no guarantees made to Rail Labor that the existing Amtrak workforce, with their union contracts, benefits, retirement, and seniority would remain intact. Amtrak reform is really an Administration buzzword for destroying Amtrak service and the lives and livelihoods of Amtrak workers who have given their skills, talents, and careers to keep the railroad running.

We want no part of the Administration's so-called Amtrak Reform Plan. Instead, we call upon the Administration to restore full funding for Amtrak, develop a dedicated funding stream similar to that provided for highways and airports, and recognize the skill and dedication of Amtrak employees through a prompt and equitable settlement of our collective bargaining agreement. For the richest nation on earth, this is not too much to ask, but it is way too much to lose.

ROLL OF HONOR

60 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
Fred R. Aimone	UN PAC	0918	1943
Chas Ardillo	CRSF	0482	1944
Nick Cerio	CRSF	0482	1941
Anthony J. Del Monte	N E	0090	1942
Leon H. Gosnell	AEF	0695	1944
W. H. Gregory	AEF	0075	1940
Harry C. Javins	AEF	0153	1944
Alfred Layne	AEF	0153	1940
S. J. Melton	AEF	0153	1936
Percy Perdue	CRSF	0482	1942
Anthony F. Petrella	CRSF	0482	1943
Melvin A. Putt	AEF	0075	1944
G. D. Ragland	AEF	0153	1945
J. V. Spurlin	AEF	0075	1947
James Sullivan	AEF	0695	1942

50 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
Lewis R. Bailey	AEF	0075	1953
Essie L. Bowles	AEF	0075	1953
Joe Davis	AEF	0695	1951
Woodie L. Dickerson	AEF	0075	1953
Frank E. Doyle	AEF	0075	1950
John H. Gwin	AEF	0153	1951
Robert G. Holmes	AEF	0075	1953
James V. Mc Williams	AEF	0695	1951
Hubert E. Ratliff	AEF	0075	1953
Salvatore P. Riggio	PENN	3023	1952
Elbert A. Underwood	AEF	0075	1953
Jethro D. Walker	AEF	0075	1952
Cline Wert	AEF	0075	1953

40 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
George D. Ambrose	AEF	0338	1958
Martin G. Carrico	AEF	0075	1956
Juan Cervantes	UN PAC	0918	1954
G. L. Hockaday	AEF	0153	1958
Juan Montoya	UN PAC	0918	1956
Joseph W. Pugh	ASF	0599	1956
George L. Ripley	AEF	0075	1956

30 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
Ron W. Alleman	BURL	2852	1972
Joseph P. Andrzejewski	AEF	0695	1975
Larry W. Anglin	AEF	0075	1970
Gerald F. Ashby	CRSF	0891	1974
James B. Ashlock	BURL	1302	1971
Allen B. Baird	AEF	0075	1970
Stephen R. Baird	AEF	0153	1974

Robert J. Baker	CRSF	0704	1974
Charles R. Barker	AEF	0153	1970
Michael J. Barone	PENN	0362	1974
Shane S. Bauman	PENN	3030	1979
Daniel A. Beasley	CRSF	0891	1974
Mark S. Berner	N E	1743	1974
Virgil R. Berry	ASF	0888	1975
Timothy H. Blackburn	AEF	0075	1974
Carl F. Blaney	CRSF	0891	1967
Eugene Borden	N E	1743	1974
Melvin C. Boyer	AEF	0695	1974
Michael T. Bruski	BURL	1302	1974
Bernard T. Burrows	AEF	0695	1973
James F. Burrows	AEF	0695	1973
Andrew B. Cadieux	N E	0090	1973
Barry M. Caldwell	AEF	0075	1970
Jose O. Camargo	BURL	1302	1973
Leo S. Carper	AEF	0075	1972
James D. Caudill	CRSF	0891	1973
Douglas L. Cordell	CRSF	0891	1975
Earnest W. Davenport	AEF	0075	1972
William T. Deery	AEF	0695	1974
Daniel D. Demont Sr	BURL	1302	1974
Jerry Dibble	BURL	2852	1974
Rene M. Drell	AEF	0695	1975
Arthur Egy	CRSF	0891	1975
Edwin L. Embrey	AEF	0338	1967
Edward M. Ernst	BURL	1302	1974
Willie H. Fleming	AEF	0338	1970
Ricky O. Frailey	BURL	1302	1972
Ronald Furner	CRSF	0891	1969
Samuel H. Garcia	BURL	1302	1969
C. G. Gentry	BURL	1302	1974
Craig A. Giacometti	MO PAC	1540	1974
Terry L. Goldsmith	BURL	1302	1975
Celso Guerrero	BURL	1302	1974
Gregory A. Guisti	BURL	1302	1973
Charles Hall	AEF	0695	1974
John Hayner	N E	0090	1974
Cecil S. Hefner	AEF	0075	1973
David C. Henderson	BURL	2852	1974
Armando Hermsillo	BURL	1302	1973
Gregory R. Howard	AEF	0695	1974
Edward I. Hyman	AEF	0695	1970
Gary Irvin	AEF	0695	1974
Gary D. Johnson	CRSF	0704	1974
Michael J. Jordan	AEF	0695	1974
John R. Kachmar	AEF	0695	1972
David J. Kemp	BURL	1302	1971
Daniel K. Kimball	BURL	1302	1973
James J. Komater	BURL	1302	1971
Michael J. Korman	CRSF	0891	1975
Thomas M. Lavin	N E	1743	1971
Steve F. Lawler	BURL	2852	1973
David H. Leonard	AEF	0695	1974
Arthur Levering	AEF	0695	1971
James R. Lewter	AEF	0695	1974
Michael D. Logsdon	BURL	0788	1974
Joseph T. Lorenz	AEF	0695	1973
Jon C. Malette	AEF	0695	1973
Robert A. Marade	CRSF	0891	1970
Frank Marchionne	N E	0090	1966
Michael J. Marge	N E	0090	1974
G. R. Mc Coy	BURL	2852	1974
Richard M. Mc Curnin	AEF	0695	1972
James T. Mc Gill	BURL	1302	1974
Gerald J. Mercier	CRSF	0891	1968
Mike E. Miller	BURL	2852	1973
Wayne J. Mitchell	AEF	0695	1973
Gerald Morehouse	N E	1743	1974
James W. Motley	BURL	1302	1974
William L. Mott	CRSF	0891	1975
Danny C. Neel	AEF	0695	1974
Carl Nomm	C&NW	2853	1975
Daniel L. Ogle	AEF	0338	1971
Jeffery L. Okland	BURL	1302	1973
Mike Olson	BURL	2852	1973
Alton W. Oregon	BURL	1302	1974
William E. Patterson	BURL	1302	1971
John D. Patterson Jr	AEF	0153	1975
Ronald L. Payne	AEF	0153	1971
James H. Pearson	AEF	0338	1971
William L. Pegram	AEF	0153	1971
Rockie J. Penafior	BURL	1302	1971
Sherman E. Piggott	AEF	0153	1970
Winfield Piggott	AEF	0153	1970
Milton L. Piper	BURL	1302	1971
Daryl K. Pudney	CRSF	0891	1975
Claude E. Revely	AEF	0075	1969
Calvin B. Reynolds	AEF	0075	1973
A. A. Rios	BURL	1302	1974
Jesus Rios	BURL	1302	1971
Larry W. Robinson	CRSF	0891	1975
Kenneth L. Roling	BURL	1302	1970
Michael J. Roschi	BURL	1302	1969
Gregory N. Rumuly	AEF	0338	1972
Billy A. Salazar	UN PAC	0918	1975
Steven J. Schaeffer	CRSF	0704	1973
Robert E. Schultz	BURL	1302	1972
Gerald L. Sheldon	BURL	1302	1973
Robert R. Simard	CRSF	0891	1975
Thomas J. Stathis	BURL	1302	1971
Larry W. Staton	AEF	0075	1973
Robert Stewart	CRSD	2910	1985
Robert J. Stockwell	AEF	0695	1972
Thomas R. Travelstead	BURL	1302	1973
James G. Turner	AEF	0338	1974
Joseph Van Guildler	N E	1743	1968
Rodney L. Weber	UN PAC	0918	1975
Edwin C. Wehmhoefer	BURL	1302	1971

Robert E. Wetzel	CRSF	0482	1975
Carl W. Wilcher Jr	AEF	0075	1974
Douglas C. Wilcox	CRSF	0704	1974
Steve A. Wilhelm	BURL	1302	1974
John E. Williams	BURL	1302	1973
George W. Williamson	UN PAC	0918	1973
Robert M. Winter	CRSF	0704	1974
Robert L. Wood Jr	AEF	0153	1970
Elmer C. Wykle	AEF	0075	1973
Roger D. Yates	AEF	0075	1973
Steven G. Young	SOU	0546	1974
Dane R. Younggren	BURL	1302	1974
Richard D. Zimmerman	CRSF	0891	1975

20 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
Fred E. Barker Jr	AEF	0153	1981
David L. Barton	N E	0090	1978
Alvin A. Boyd	AEF	0075	1981
Gary E. Brooks	AEF	0075	1982
George A. Broughman	AEF	0075	1981
Donald W. Bryant	AEF	0075	1980
Michael Burns	N E	0090	1978
Kenneth J. Butler	N E	0090	1980
William T. Crippen	AEF	0695	1984
William Dillard Jr	AEF	0153	1981
Ezekiel D. Downey	AEF	0075	1982
Robert W. Droke	AEF	0075	1981
Edward G. Egerton	CRSD	2910	1985
Robert B. Fletcher	AEF	0695	1981
Dale A. Fowler	N E	0090	1978
Marty E. Gascoigne	BURL	1302	1979
Dennis E. Gervais	N E	0090	1977
Frank X. Gioia	CRSF	0704	1976
George F. Goodall	AEF	0338	1982
Mervin T. Goodall	AEF	0338	1985
Ralph E. Goodman	AEF	0153	1981
Terry Graham	N E	0090	1977
Peter D. Graveline	N E	0090	1977
Patrick M. Green	BURL	1302	1979
Manuel N. Guerrero	BURL	1302	1981
Jerome L. Harlow	AEF	0075	1981
Robert W. Harlow	AEF	0075	1982
Roger D. Harlow	AEF	0075	1982
Glen A. Harris	N E	0090	1978
Charles P. Hiller	CRSD	2910	1985
Russell H. Hodge	N E	0090	1977
Lee W. Holloway	AEF	0075	1981
Richard M. Jeffcoat	N E	0090	1977
Phillip D. Johnson	AEF	0338	1984
Adam Kircun	CRSD	2910	1985
James F. Lacks	AEF	0075	1982
Mack E. Lee	AEF	0338	1981
Martin T. Lidie	AEF	0695	1981
Michael J. Matthews	N E	0090	1978
Bennie R. Mc Guire	AEF	0153	1981
Danny R. Myers	AEF	0695	1983
Roger G. Newton	N E	0090	1977
Michael S. Page	MO PAC	0965	1985
Edward P. Peters Jr	AEF	0075	1982
Thomas E. Plecker Jr	AEF	0075	1981
Winston L. Posey Jr	AEF	0075	1981
David S. Rae	AEF	0153	1981
Kenneth W. Ragland	AEF	0153	1981
Steven W. Reynolds	AEF	0153	1981
Edward Richardson	N E	0090	1979
Leo K. Rickert	C&NW	0437	1980
Richard D. Sauter Sr	AEF	0695	1982

David C. Seltzer	AEF	0695	1981
John Skawinski	N E	0090	1977
Kenneth J. Solon	N E	0090	1979
Braulio Sotelo Jr	BURL	1302	1976
Charles Spike	CRSF	0704	1976
Robert Stewart	CRSD	2910	1985
Kenneth K. Sullivan	N E	0090	1977
James M. Thompson Jr	AEF	0338	1984
John T. Trasher	AEF	0075	1982
Ralph L. Tucker Jr	AEF	0075	1981
Alan W. Whittington	AEF	0695	1981
Croxtton Witherspoon	AEF	0338	1981
Todd R. Wolfe	AEF	0075	1982
Roger D. Wright	AEF	0153	1981
Thomas E. Wright	AEF	0153	1981

10 year

MERIT AWARDS

LODGE NAME	SYSTEM	NUMBER	MEMBER SINCE
Thomas P. Alley	AEF	2925	1993
Royce A. Biegler	BURL	2852	1995
Jeffrey S. Brown	AEF	2925	1993
Carl E. Deaton	SOU	0636	1995
Francis M. Duhamel	AEF	2925	1994
Richard W. Hinnant	AEF	2925	1990
Tadious J. Makara	N E	0090	1987
John R. Mandeville Jr	N E	0090	1993
Andrew Meyer	AEF	0338	1994
Pedro Ponce	BURL	1302	1992
Ronald A. Popp	SP ATL	0376	1995
Francisco A. Quinonez	BURL	1302	1994
Paul Sillis	N E	0090	1994
Warren S. Smith	AEF	0338	1987
William W. Wozniak	BURL	1302	1992

Centenarians

Belated happy birthday wishes to the following BMWED Brothers who recently celebrated their 100th birthday:

Jake Murphy

A Wake Forest, North Carolina resident, celebrated his 100th birthday on April 29, 2005. Brother Murphy was employed by the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad as a track laborer.

Walter Turner

A Hiram, Georgia resident, celebrated his 100th birthday on April 25, 2005. Brother Turner was employed by the Seaboard Airline Railway as an surfacing gang laborer.

The BMWED extends sincere best wishes to our retired centenarians. Happy Birthday!

DEATH BENEFITS

Report of Claims Paid during March/April, 2005

NAME	LODGE NUMBER	SYSTEM	NAME	LODGE NUMBER	SYSTEM
LEROY HILDBRANDT	2834	ICGF	HUGH C. BROOKS	3025	PENN
RICHARD C. NEALLEY	0633	N E	RAUL M. HOLGUIN	0675	MO PAC
JAMES LAWTON	0806	SOU	EVERETT R. CLEMONS	3043	PENN
CLARENCE STROMBERG	0249	BURNOR	LINDO B. GILLISPIE	0551	ASF
SAMUEL M. JOHNSON	1021	MO PAC	ALVE E. JOHNSON	1296	BURNOR
THOMAS HAXTON	0041	C&E	HAROLD E. WHITE	2834	ICGF
CHARLES M. CLARK	2404	AT&SF	JOHN M. MACK	0226	ASF
MARK C. PLUMB	0493	FRISCO	PAGE L. QUINN	1193	MO PAC
VERNON ANDERLY	0343	C&NW	HOY M. HYDEN	0407	PACFED
JAMES O. BLACKBURN	1003	C&E	JAMES W. HUBER	3005	PENN
MERIDETH TILLMAN	1165	ICGF	HUGH D. BROUGHMAN	0075	AEF
ADRIAN G. LESTER	0420	CMSTPP	JAMES I. MORTON	0568	ASF
KENNETH BUSH					



BMWED Legislative Issues – 109th Congress

Amtrak FY 2006 Appropriations

An effort spearheaded by Senate Democrats to save Amtrak's federal subsidy was defeated on Mar. 16 when the Senate rejected an amendment to its 2006 budget resolution offered by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) to restore \$1.4 billion for Amtrak in fiscal 2006. Though the amendment failed 46-52, four Northeastern Republican senators – Lincoln Chaffee (RI), Arlen Specter (PA), Olympia Snowe (ME) and Susan Collins (ME) – joined Democrats in supporting the failed amendment. Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) voted wrong, and Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Mark Pryor (D-AR) did not vote. The Senate adopted S. Con. Res. 18 on Mar. 17. On the same day, the House adopted its 2006 budget resolution (S. Con. Res. 95). The House resolution provides 1.2 million for Amtrak which is the same level of funding that they received for 2005.

On Apr. 28 the House and Senate passed the fiscal 2006 budget resolution (conference report). The amount for transportation spending in the conference report on the budget is the same as the President's request. There is no specific line item for Amtrak, therefore, no additional funding is included to restore the cuts to Amtrak. In preparation for Appropriations Subcommittee hearings to begin, twenty two Republican House Members signed an Apr. 29 letter to Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), Chairman of the Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, requesting the Subcommittee provide \$1.8 billion for Amtrak in FY06.

(Note: Budget resolutions are advisory and are not law. The appropriations process will determine exact funding levels for Amtrak and all federally

funded programs. The budget conference means we will have a more difficult time in appropriations this year as the appropriators will have to cut other transportation programs to restore funding for Amtrak.)

Administration's Amtrak Reform Bill

On Apr. 20 the Administration's Amtrak "reform" legislation was introduced in the House. As expected, the Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act (H.R. 1713) is the same privatization bill that the Administration sent to Congress in 2003. The bill establishes two private for-profit corporations to separately manage and maintain infrastructure and operations, eliminates our nation's intercity passenger rail network and shifts the cost burden of continuing rail service to the states, separates the Northeast Corridor from the rest of the rail network, divides Amtrak into three separate entities, and eliminates Federal operating support for all intercity passenger trains over a four-year period.

BMWED is mobilized to fight Bush's radical and irresponsible plan that threatens rail service for 25 million passengers and the jobs and railroad retirement benefits of 20,000 Amtrak workers.

Amtrak Reauthorization

Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Chairman of the Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee, held a hearing on the reauthorization of Amtrak on Apr. 21. Representatives from Amtrak, the Amtrak Board, and the DOT were panel members.

David Gunn, Amtrak President, submitted a request for \$1.82 billion in funding for FY'06 and released Amtrak's Strategic Reform Plan. The plan

echos the Bush plan to privatize Amtrak, and calls for direct Congressional interference in labor-management negotiations at Amtrak and for repeal of pension, disability, unemployment, survivor, and worker injury protections for thousands of Amtrak employees.

After criticizing the Administration's plan to privatize Amtrak and hand much of its routes to states, Lott said he would like to see the rail service receive a dedicated funding stream instead of having to beg Congress each year for an appropriation. He mentioned large-scale bonding as one possibility.

Kenneth M. Mead, the Transportation Department's Inspector General, said Amtrak will need \$1.4 to \$1.5 billion in fiscal 2007 just to maintain the status quo. He also said eliminating Amtrak's money losing long-distance routes would not solve Amtrak's funding problem — it would only save \$300 million annually, and its effects would not be immediate because of certain labor agreements.

On Apr. 14 Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Jim Oberstar (D-MN) joined with Chairman Don Young (R-AK), Railroad Subcommittee Chairman Steve LaTourette (R-OH), and Subcommittee Ranking Member Corrine Brown (D-FL) in introducing two bills: The Amtrak Reauthorization Act of 2005 (H.R. 1630) and the Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century (RIDE-21) (H.R. 1631). Both bipartisan bills were introduced last Congress.

The T&I Committee reported them out, but no further action was taken.

The Amtrak Reauthorization Act of 2005 (H.R. 1630) provides Amtrak \$2 billion for each of Fiscal Years 2006 through 2008, assures RRB benefits to retirees and their dependents, assures unemployment benefits, assures payment of contractual obligations, requires an annual business plan from Amtrak, requires bi-monthly progress reports of the business plan, gives money to Amtrak prior to their (capital) obligations/needs, and prevents Amtrak from subsidizing the losses of commuter/freight business.

RIDE-21 (H.R. 1631) provides \$71 billion for new high-speed rail development for passenger and freight rail improvements. The bill establishes authority for states or interstate compacts to issue \$12 billion in federally tax-exempt bonds and \$12 billion in federal tax-credit bonds for infrastructure improvements for high-speed passenger railroad infrastructure. It reauthorizes and modifies the existing Swift Rail Development Act, a program to develop high-speed rail corridors, by extending the program authority through fiscal year 2011. The legislation expands the existing Railroad Rehabilitation & Infrastructure Financing (RRIF) loan and loan guarantee program by increasing funding authority from \$3.5 billion to \$35 billion of outstanding loan principal at any time.

On Apr. 27 the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously adopted H.R. 1630 and H.R. 1631. BMWED strongly supports both bills.

TEA Reauthorization

The House on Mar. 10 passed a sur- See **Legislative Issues** on Page 7



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