



“At a Glance”

Understanding the Development of our Railroad Retirement System

Many of our members participating in our recent 2024 National Negotiations Survey expressed interest within the survey to change the age or eligibility requirements for our retirement annuities.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR MEMBERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR RETIREMENT PROGRAM IS NOT A BARGAINED BENEFIT, IT IS THE OUTCOME OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION!

We cannot work within railroad collective bargaining to change retirement ages or eligibility formulas for a retirement annuity. Those sorts of changes require amending or replacing the various laws that govern our railroad retirement, including:

- The Railroad Retirement Acts of 1934 and 1935
- The Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 and later amendments
- The Railroad Retirement Act of 1974
- 1981 Amendments to the Railroad Retirement Act
- The 1983 Railroad Retirement Solvency Act
- The Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001
- Various other laws and court decisions

Why should I care?

If our members mistakenly believe our retirement benefits are subject to collective bargaining, they will misunderstand how we can effectively advocate for improvements through work by our BMWED Legislative Department and our partners in Washington DC.

Our members may also develop impossible expectations for bargaining outcomes we cannot achieve at the negotiating table, since we can't change federal laws in bargaining talks. Our strength as a union, and in bargaining, comes from our members teaching and informing one another with accurate facts, elevating our common understanding of how our rights and benefits are governed.

Where should I go to learn more?

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has a wealth of information and resources regarding your retirement, disability, and unemployment benefits online at <https://rrb.gov>.

You can learn more about the specific laws and decisions that developed our current retirement system by visiting RRB's page for that history at https://rrb.gov/Development_of_the_Railroad_Retirement_System.

What is important for me and my family to remember?

Planning for your retirement can be complex. You and your family can reach out to RRB and their various Field Offices for further guidance, or check out the resources available through the Office of the Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board:

<https://rrb.gov/OurAgency/LaborMember/Pre-RetirementSeminars>
<https://rrb.gov/OurAgency/LaborMember/EducationalMaterials>