

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you begin work on crafting the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) we write to express strong bipartisan support for the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) by requesting \$185 million for its Limitation on Administration (LOA).

In the 1930s, American railroaders gained access to a new railroad retirement system, which preceded the creation of Social Security. The vast majority of railroad workers are not covered by Social Security and do not receive state unemployment insurance benefits. The RRB is an independent federal agency that administers retirement, survivor, disability, unemployment, and sickness benefits for rail workers and their families. It oversees a uniquely efficient and well-run retirement system that is projected to stay solvent through the next 75 years, the maximum time horizon its actuaries can project. The RRB is the sole entity that provides these essential earned benefits, a key workforce recruitment and retention tool for an industry competing for the next generation of talent.

The RRB's administrative costs are funded entirely by the rail industry and rail workers' contributions to the RRB Trust Funds, not by taxpayer dollars. The RRB's field representatives across the country help rail workers and their families file claims and counsel customers about applying for benefits. Agency staff also help adjudicate benefits claims and process payments. Setting the RRB's LOA at its requested level simply allows the agency to use its own RRB Trust Funds to serve our country's railroad workers and their families and give them access to the benefits they have worked and paid for. That is why this request is supported by the Transportation Trades Department (TTD), AFL-CIO, which represents the totality of rail labor; International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT); the Association of American Railroads (AAR); and the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA).

In Fiscal Year 2026, Congress funded the LOA account at \$127 million, which was a \$1 million increase over Fiscal Year 2025. While we appreciate that this account received a modest increase, as a result of outdated technology and operating systems, limited staffing, and stagnant

administrative funding, the casework backlog continues to grow. The average turnaround time for disability claims rose to an astonishing 14 months in the last year, an extremely long time for railroaders and their families to go without the benefits they need and have earned over a lifetime of hard work.

RRB's benefits processing systems rely on technology developed decades ago, which severely slows down processing times and creates logistical hurdles for beneficiaries. Additionally, roughly a fifth of the RRB's workforce is eligible to retire today, leaving the agency at risk of losing technological expertise and further hampering service to beneficiaries. The agency urgently needs the resources to backfill these positions and train new workers. This constraint on administrative expenses has greatly diminished customer service for the rail workers and retirees who depend on this system. A continued lack of an increase on RRB's LOA would significantly undermine the RRB's ability to serve railroad workers, retirees, and their families.

For these reasons, we urge you to set the RRB's LOA at \$185 million in the FY27 LHHS bill. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



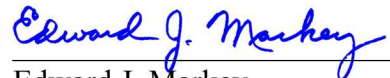
Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



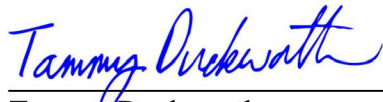
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



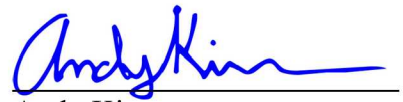
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator




Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
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Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator