

Teamsters testify in support of Rail, Transit Security Act

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Security Training and Whistleblower Protections Will Aid Workers

WASHINGTON - A Teamsters Rail Conference official testified before the House Homeland Security Committee today in support of the Rail and Transit Security Act of 2007, H.R. 1269. Edward Rodzwick, President of the Teamsters Rail Conference, said the act's provisions are of particular importance to union members, including training and whistleblower protections.

"Rail labor has taken every opportunity since 9/11 to advocate for strong security legislation for the railroad industry," Rodzwick said. "This bill addresses many of the issues we have raised over the past 5 1/2 years."

"The need for recurrent training for front-line railroad workers has long been a major theme for us, and we fully support conducting periodic, unannounced exercises so that the sufficiency of security plans can be tested and in order for our members to better understand the goals and elements of their employers' security plans," Rodzwick said.

More than 80 percent of rail workers surveyed as part of the Rail Conference's "High Alert" report said that they had not received any or additional security or terrorism related training from their employers since 9/11.

"There have been more than 250 terrorist attacks on railroads worldwide in the past 12 years," Rodzwick said. "The FBI has warned that our rail system is a likely target for terrorists and still the carriers are allowed to keep their security plans in the dark, not only to their workers but also their investors and the communities in which they operate."

Other parts of bill H.R. 1269 provide for whistleblower protections and due process for employees undergoing background checks. "Whistleblower protections are absolutely necessary in order for our members to feel comfortable in the security environment this bill will create," Rodzwick said. "Previous background checks have cost a half-dozen workers their jobs. Rail workers are entitled to due process."

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