

Legislative news

NMB Delivers; Democracy Wins!

History was made on Monday, May 10, 2010, when a 76-year-old transportation law was swept away; the National Mediation Board filed in the Federal Register a change to the rules governing representation elections conducted under the Railway Labor Act.

Previous Rule—Under the Railway Labor Act, any worker who did not participate was counted as a "NO" vote, encouraging voter suppression.

Rule Change—Future representation elections will require a simple majority of those who participate and cast a ballot.

For far too long, the rules have provided an upper hand to corporations while undermining those who participate in the election process. The rule change will level the playing field and reflect the will of working people in the airline and rail industries.

This change was not easy. It took months of lobbying Senators and Representatives along with the outreach of support to all AFL-CIO Presidents, Labor Councils, Unions and Community organizations. I want to thank all of you who worked so hard on this campaign. IAM members gathered over 24 thousand letters and cards of support to send to the NMB. I just returned from Washington, D.C., where I was able to thank many Senators and Representatives who had supported this change.

As of May 13, 2010, 25 Republican Senators have cosponsored a "resolution of disapproval" (S.J. Res30) by Senator Johnny Isakson, R-GA, trying to block the rule change. The privileged resolution provides for expedited procedures in the Senate. It is not amendable, cannot be interrupted for other business once brought to the floor, and requires only a simple majority for passage, which cuts off the possibility of a filibuster.

The resolution of disapproval, ultimately, may prove to be a quixotic quest. Even with its expedited procedures, the Senate has only 60 legislative days from the date the rule was published in the Federal Register to act before the expedited procedures expire. The resolution would also require approval in the House, which has no expedited procedures. And, even assuming the resolution clears a Congress controlled by Democrats, it would have to be signed by President Obama—an unlikely outcome. And, as we expected, the Air Transport Association is expected to file an injunction against the final rule by May 17.

The NMB decision that was published in the Federal Register must remain for 30 days before the new election rules take effect. Thank you for your patience and for all your support. You are a part of history; Democracy wins!



UNION LABEL



10-028

In solidarity,

Lisa Stager

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Legislative Director

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