

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

WHEREAS, the Teamsters Union represents hundreds of thousands of transportation workers who move cargo and people throughout the United States by land, sea and air; and

WHEREAS, these workers perform their duties in workplaces such as a truck, bus or locomotive cab, an airplane, on railroad tracks and on right of ways and highways, at airports and at seaports, and deserve a safe and healthy work environment; and

WHEREAS, various corporate interests have pushed the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (“FMCSA”), Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) and Congress to weaken worker safety protections including hours-of-service (“HOS”) regulations and state-mandated meal and rest breaks for truck drivers, to prevent reforms that would provide minimum rest requirements for flight attendants and put cargo pilots under the same science-based HOS regime as passenger pilots, and to afford locomotive engineers and trainmen with predictable work schedules; and

WHEREAS, twenty-one (21) states have enacted laws or regulations that provide meal and/or rest breaks to their workers, including truck drivers, and regulations enacted by FMCSA and at the behest of the trucking industry, have preempted these state mandated breaks, which will undermine protections for drivers under state law, as well as access to meal and rest breaks throughout their workdays; and

WHEREAS, the trucking industry has re-written hours-of-service regulations through the regulatory process, including expanding the use of the short-haul exemption, and increasing the total on-duty time that a driver can work before being required to take their thirty (30) minute rest break; and

WHEREAS, meal and rest breaks have been determined to be a necessary safeguard against fatigue in all modes of transportation and the previous truck driver HOS regulations were based on sound science that was designed to prevent cumulative fatigue; and

WHEREAS, fatigue remains prevalent in all modes of transportation and recent accidents leading to worker fatalities on our highways, railways, and in aviation have reinforced the need for workers to receive proper rest and maintain predictable work schedules that do not result in cumulative fatigue; and

WHEREAS, the pursuit for cheap labor and less regulatory oversight have led to an expansion of foreign repair stations for commercial aircraft, causing the loss of American jobs in the U.S. airline industry, and led to a lack of safety measures including

insufficient criminal background checks or drug and alcohol testing for workers in these safety sensitive jobs at foreign repair stations; and

WHEREAS, these conditions have compromised the quality of repairs and ultimately the safety of aircraft that are repaired at foreign repair stations; and

WHEREAS, lithium batteries can self-ignite, burn violently and are very difficult to extinguish, and legislation currently before Congress requires full harmonization of U.S. regulations with international protocols and temporarily bans all lithium batteries on passenger aircraft until the development of appropriate shipping standards and places limits on lithium-ion batteries on all cargo flights; and

WHEREAS, the full regulation of lithium batteries would have a positive impact on the safety of airline passengers and the air cargo supply chain; and

WHEREAS, cargo pilots have been denied the same basic workplace safety protections currently extended to passenger-carrying pilots, and all pilots, regardless of what they are hauling deserve ten (10) hours of rest in between flights; and

WHEREAS, Congress and the FAA must immediately require Cargo pilots have ten (10) hours of rest in between flights to ensure their safety and the safety of the American public; and

WHEREAS, positive train control (PTC) technology, improved track worker protection, the requirement of a two-person crew, and the extension of Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) coverage to railroad workers will improve the safe movement of passengers and cargo, especially hazardous materials, and reduce fatal injuries to our members on trains and along the railroad right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the railroad industry has implemented extreme cost-cutting measures, reductions in manpower and dangerous safety metrics in the pursuit of precision scheduled railroading (“PSR”) and equivalent programs, has lax safety protection for track workers, and opposes legislation that would mandate two-person crews and FMLA coverage; and

WHEREAS, railroads have been lax in initiating safety and security measures unless mandated by Congress and the Federal Railroad Administration; and

WHEREAS, both railroads and trucking carriers have pushed to expand the use of foreign labor to replace American workers, through the expansion of temporary work visa programs, unilateral operational changes, and regulatory reforms which allow for the expanded use of foreign rail crews within the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED at this 30th International Convention that the Teamsters Union calls upon Congress to stand up for the safety of workers in all the transportation modes, to ignore the special interests that want to shortcut necessary on-the-job protections, and to reexamine policies and regulations that jeopardize the safety of transportation workers and enact strong legislation to protect them; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Teamsters Union will call upon its rank and file members, stewards, business agents and officers to redouble their efforts to promote safety in the transportation industry workplace.