

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: September 9, 2019 for testimony on September 10, 2019 _____

Name: Jeff Brandow _____

Are you representing: Yourself Yes _____ Organization N/A _____

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: Locomotive Engineer _____

Address: 1237 Washington Ave., Apt. 1112 _____

City: Cleveland _____ State: OH _____ Zip: 44113 _____

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes X No _____

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 186 _____

Specific Issue: 2-person train crew legislation. _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent X Opponent _____ Interested Party _____

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes _____ No X _____

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 10 minutes or less _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position: At the present time I am employed by a railroad labor organization, and I hold an appointive position within. Concurrently, I maintain my employment relationship with a Class I railroad in the Cleveland, Ohio, area and my federal certification remains current. I am not duly elected our authorized to represent my union in any capacity on this matter, rather, I would be humbled and honored to offer the Subcommittee my experience as a 7-year train conductor and a 3-year locomotive engineer. The unique challenges we, as railroad employees, deal with on a daily basis make the thought of single-person train crews unfathomable.

On October 10, 2007, a train carrying 112 cars of mixed freight derailed and burst into flames in Painesville, Ohio, while traveling at a speed of 48 miles per hour. Of the 31 cars that derailed, 7

of them were loaded with ethanol, 1 was loaded with liquefied petroleum gas, and 1 was loaded with phthalic anhydride – a chemical which, if inhaled, can cause serious respiratory harm.

The crew on that train had to work quickly. As the engineer began the process of recovering from an emergency braking application, he called the train dispatcher to report the derailment and stop the trains moving on adjacent tracks. Meanwhile, the conductor gathered paperwork to identify the contents of the derailed cars and he got down to separate the locomotives from the burning consist. It didn't take long before they were able to pull down to the nearest road crossing and safely hand over key information to the courageous first responders from the Painesville City Fire Department, who began the process of evacuating about 1,400 residents from a surrounding area of approximately 3 square miles. The fire was not declared to be under control until more than 48 hours later.

I wish the crew on that train could offer their own testimony, however, the engineer is no longer employed by the railroad and I could not reach him for comments. The conductor on that train has since retired and passed away, although, I spoke to him on the day of the derailment and his firsthand account was chilling. I wish this Subcommittee could have heard the fear in his voice as he described the heat from the fire that made it almost impossible to run back and separate those locomotives. He told me about how everything in his core told him to run the other way, but he felt he had an obligation to protect his engineer and the people in the nearby housing development. His name was Henry Johnson, and he was an incredible mentor and role model to me as a young conductor.

An investigation by the NTSB determined that the probable cause of the derailment was a broken rail due to the carrier's installation of an incorrect type of rail joint bar in the prior month. The "temporary joint" had been in place for about 10 months prior to the accident, and CSX was not able to provide a date when that temporary joint would have been welded and the joint bars removed.

Fast forward to 2019, and wall street has become obsessed with a concept known as "precision scheduled railroading". Invented by the late E. Hunter Harrison during his tenure as CEO of the Canadian National Railway, and later applied in the States during his tenure as CEO of CSX Transportation, there is nothing "precise" or "scheduled" in its practice. In an attempt to increase profits, nearly every Class I railroad in the country has now begun running trains up to 2 and 3 miles in length – about twice as long as the one that derailed in Painesville. Another aspect of so-called precision scheduled railroading is to defer maintenance and avoid investing in infrastructure. It doesn't take long to see, this is a recipe for disaster.

At a time where our country is politically divided, I want to believe that we can at least find some common ground on issues relating to railroad and public safety. To require 2 crew members on every train isn't disrupting or adding cost to the carriers' or the consumers' bottom line – it would maintain the status quo where the railroads, in their infinite greed, have indicated that we should address this matter at the bargaining table. In my humble opinion, safety is not negotiable.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for this incredible opportunity to weigh in.