Date: September 5, 2019

From: Kathleen Bisbikis, National President - Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineer & Trainman Auxiliary /Wife, Daughter, and Aunt of three career railroaders

Re: Written Testimony in support of Ohio Rail Safety Bill H.B. No 186

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony in support of H.B. No 186 the Ohio Rail Safety Bill.

The railroad carriers have over the years reduced crew size dramatically whittling it down to the current minimum of a federally licensed and certified conductor and engineer. The engineer runs the train, and the conductor manages the cars as well as keeping in touch with the dispatchers, other crews, the local yard offices, and first responders when necessary as well as the public.

The carriers would like the public to be blind to the dangers that will occur if a two-person crew safety bill is not implemented in each state. It is in your hands to protect the people of your state against potential dangers to your constituents and the environment that will surely be put into jeopardy as trains become longer and carry more and more hazardous materials and dangerous cargo that the public is not aware of.

In the events of an accident (train v. car) are you aware that it is the conductor that gets off the train, locates the injured parties, calls first responders and keeps the public at bay until help has arrived. The engineer cannot leave the train unattended without securing it, removing a second person from the train in this scenario would result in absolute chaos. However, some carriers allegedly claim they would rather pay the lawsuits from the families of those killed than the wages of a second person on the engine of their trains. Clearly, putting their own pocketbook of higher importance than the citizens of the cities and towns that they travel through night and day.

In a recent event on my own husband's train which travels along a very high grade in the famous Feather River Canyon of California, a rockslide had occurred. The tracks in this area is a series of twist and turns and based upon the curvature of track and the placement of my husband in the cab of the engine he was the only one able to see the upcoming giant boulder that had landed directly in the middle of the track. He made his engineer aware and put the train into an emergency stop. The boulder was so large that had the engineer been traveling alone he would have hit the rock. Due to his line of sight in the engine, he would have seen it too late prompting a derailment and the train to fall off the tracks into a vast canyon below. The 8 to 10 feet that crew members sit away from each other in the cab provides a separate and unique view out the window of the cab of the locomotive that can be the difference between life and death. It can prevent a derailment that would inevitably cost millions of dollars for the railroads and potentially poison water systems in your lakes and streams as well as even more potentially dangerous results.

On behalf of myself, my family and the members of the BLET Auxiliary that I represent across this nation, please do not put the lives of the people in the State of Ohio in jeopardy. Two people on the engine of every locomotive across this county should not be a question of if it's necessary... it should be demanded for the safety of all of us.