

Good morning, Chairman Edwards, Vice Chairman LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Finance Committee. My name is Desmon Brown and I'm a 17-year railroad employee for a major railroad based in Columbus, Ohio. I also serve as the Legislative Representative for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in Columbus.

There are so many instances where a two-person crew has been vital in my railroad career, rather I was on the ground working as a conductor, or inside the cab of the locomotive working as an engineer. While operating a locomotive not only are you being vigilant to your surroundings outside the windows, there's also two screens in front of you, and one on the left. The second set of eyes and ears defiantly plays a huge role in the safe movement of the train from point A to B.

Secondly, a two-person crew is key in an emergency situation. I know this from firsthand experience. On Apr 6, 2022, I was an engineer on a grain train in Kenton, Ohio. As we completed putting together our train, which was a little over a mile long, I began to feel faint. This all happened on a single main line and the head end of the train was in between State Route 31 and County Road 180. On both sides of the locomotive were nothing but wooded areas that were not accessible by vehicles. The only communication available was the radio inside the locomotive cab and my cell phone, which was turned off and stowed in my bags. I was able to notify the dispatcher of the situation as my conductor was nearing the locomotive. My conductor found me lying on the floor and was able to safely move the train to the nearest road crossing for me to seek medical attention.

I am proof that keeping an engineer and conductor together on a train is beyond essential in a life-or-death situation. I appreciate your time today, and am happy to answer any questions.