

U.S. rail workers win tentative union contract, averting nationwide strike

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Washington, September 15 (RHC)-- Unions representing U.S. railroad workers have reached a tentative agreement with their employers to avert a potential strike that was set to start just after midnight tonight, threatening to bring passenger and freight rail service across the United States to a halt.

The White House announced the agreement in a statement early this morning, calling it an “important win for our economy and the American people.” The deal must still be ratified by union members.

The breakthrough came after Vermont independent Senator Bernie Sanders blocked a bid by Senate Republicans to pass a bill that would have imposed contract terms on the unions. Sanders said: “Right now if you work in the freight rail industry, one of the most grueling and dangerous jobs in America, you are entitled to a grand total of zero sick days. ... Part of the contract negotiations, the rail workers are asking for 15 paid sick days. This is not a radical idea.”

The Washington Post reports the proposed contract meets one of the workers’ key demands: “the ability to take days off for medical care without being subject to discipline.”

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