

*Thousands sign open letter  
demanding Biden order paid sick  
leave for railway workers*

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Washington, December 6 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden faces mounting pressure to take executive action to ensure that freight rail workers have paid sick leave, including from an open letter spearheaded by The Lever that's already been signed by thousands of people, according to the online news outlet.

Calls for Biden to issue such an order have been stacking up since the U.S. Senate passed a resolution forcing rail workers on the verge of striking to accept a White House-brokered agreement without paid sick days. Earlier, the president signed the measure for which he'd advocated, provoking widespread working-class outrage.

"You have previously stated, unequivocally, that all workers deserve paid sick leave. And yet you have just signed a bill from Congress to force unionized rail workers to go back to work without appropriate paid sick leave," begins the letter to Biden. "Right now, you have the executive authority to extend paid sick leave to rail workers, and you do not need congressional approval to do that. We implore you to use that power right now."

"No one, especially in the world's richest nation, should have to choose between forgoing pay or working through severe illness and family emergencies. Rail workers keep our infrastructure moving—their work is hard and critical to the success of our nation." The open letter to Biden says: "It is your moral obligation to immediately take executive action that fulfills your presidential campaign pledge to support paid sick days." In a tweet Monday afternoon, The Lever said that nearly 8,000 had already signed on to it.

David Sirota, The Lever's founder and editor in chief, said that "Biden wants you to believe it's all Republicans' fault. But he has the power to do this right now." Other critics of how Biden and Democratic congressional leaders responded to the rail dispute have also spent the past few days pushing for further action.

"If you are outraged about Congress' handling of the railway strike, join me in demanding that President Biden sign an executive order guaranteeing at least seven days of paid sick leave for railroad workers," said former Labor Secretary Robert Reich. "If these workers are vital to the economy, why not treat them as such?"

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