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Surface Transportation Board
C/O The Honorable Martin Oberman
395 East St., SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Office of Proceedings
May 26, 2022
Part of
Public Record

01 May 2022

Chairman Oberman,

I hope this letter finds you and each of the distinguished members of the board, well. Please, be sure to share this with each of them. I didn't know how to apply for a chance to speak at the hearing that was held on the 26th and 27th of April. However, I did sit down and watch the proceedings only to find that sitting back and doing nothing isn't an option. I watched great presentations by several of my fellow railroad colleagues in various crafts. Let me start with a little history about me and the background I have concerning relevance to this matter.

In 2005, I was hired by Norfolk Southern (NS) as a conductor trainee on the former Virginia Division. My company has changed so drastically since then, I don't recognize it anymore. I still remember the hotel where the hiring session was held, the three other people in the room with me, and the representatives of NS. It's funny, some things just have a way of burning images into your memory that you just can't seem to forget. I had dreamed of a career on the railroad. I saw myself as a child sitting behind the throttle of a locomotive. I imagined the tremendous responsibility the engineer had on his shoulders to make this behemoth comply with his wishes. And yet, so many times as I watched the trains pass through my hometown, the engineer made it look effortless. Back then, things were done differently, we still had the old guys around. The railroad is a very dangerous place, injuries are permanent or fatal in 99% of cases. The equipment is cold, hard steel with zero emotion. It is massive, heavy, and unforgiving. I recall a conductor telling me when I was brand new, "Kid, you're the only soft, squishy thing out here." Of course, I was offended by this not fully able at that time in my life to grasp the reference. I was in good shape, and I thought, how dare he say I am soft and squishy! I remember distinctly seeing hire dates of some of these men in the 1960's. These were professional railroaders, skilled laborers, truly competent and able to do their jobs exceedingly well. At that time, the railroad was suffering from a serious labor shortage. I spent almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year training due to changes in my work location. It's worth noting that my first year on the railroad would've yielded a salary near \$50,000.00 had I not spent so much time on training pay, which was very poor at the time. Here we are nearly 18 years later and the pay for starting out still falls woefully short of where it should at a mere \$52,000.00, as mentioned by our representatives. To put this in perspective, when I was in high school, I was making \$7.75 an hour working at a local gas station just a few short months before being hired by NS. Today, that same job starts out around \$15.50 an hour for a beginner store employee. This is still far below what is required to live in America in 2022, but double what it was when I started. Our wages consistently fail to keep up with or outpace inflation, while the railroads continue to brag to Wall Street about their record profits quarter after quarter and year after year.

Fast forward to Harrisburg, PA. Norfolk Southern had acquired this area of Pennsylvania Railroad's former mainline from Jersey to Chicago in its split of Conrail in 1999. This area of the railroad has a grand history. The men and women of the PRR were geniuses whose reputations will outlive them for many generations to come. The world-famous Rockville bridge stands proudly over the Susquehanna River over 120 years after it was built. It's stood the test of time. It has seen steam, diesel, passenger, and today's modern super trains. It even survived the devastation brought on by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Today, it serves Norfolk Southern and is considered by many to be the gateway to the west. The same men and women of the PRR who built this bridge in the year 1900 built many stone arch bridges across the PRR mainline. The Keystone was a very carefully planned out and positioned locking stone that was placed in each arch to hold everything together, which is widely understood to be a method lost in time to supposed newer and better ways of doing things. The engineers, architects, and skilled tradesmen who constructed this colossus have long since returned to the ground, and yet their legacy lives on. Pennsylvania is often referred to as the Keystone State as an endearing term referring to the solidarity and support Pennsylvania offered a new and budding nation. The same creative men and women were also responsible for the development of the PRR position light signal and the modern cab signal. Today, cab signals are still used by Amtrak on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and on several areas of Norfolk Southern's railroad where they have been in service since the early 1900's. In fact, during the PTC re-signaling project, a cab signal with no wayside signal system was installed. The purpose of such a design is to limit the amount of physical wayside signals standing that need maintenance, and to allow trains to run closer together by having numerous one-mile blocks built in.

Many of our signal engineering folks are not at all familiar with how cab signals work. They're used to the old southern way of doing things. Their signals are very simple. Get the lead out, slow down, and stop is essentially what they tell you. In the north where cab signals are used, the designs are far more complex and take a deep and intimate knowledge of how it works, to design it properly. In the Harrisburg Terminal which is extremely busy, the new design between CP Harrisburg and CP Rockville, a little over four miles, has taken a 10-minute run time and turned it in to 27-minutes in certain instances. This same area has increased the Amtrak run time by over four minutes. The answer I get when I question this is that the new braking distance calculations require it. I have personally been over this territory hundreds of times along with countless colleagues who can also attest to the fact that this design is overly restrictive. I think a kindergartener could've made a better design to be completely honest. At NS, everyone talks about collaboration and teamwork, but it is nothing more than feel good rhetoric. Nobody in the company will listen or take into consideration any advice that wasn't their own idea, especially if this comes from a union employee. I could go on for days and countless other scenarios where just such things have been implemented to the ultimate detriment of the shipper, consumer, and economy at large. Even scenarios where catastrophic accidents were averted by a seasoned dispatcher telling a crew they were lined a different way than the signal system told them they were. The Federal Railroad Administration did nothing seeing as the design implemented was technically fine, but the devil was in the details that they glossed over either due to lack of interest or lack of knowledge in the topical area.

In 2006, NS was looking for remote control locomotive operators in its Harrisburg and Enola yards. I was one of three employees at the time on an extra board that called for over forty. I didn't much care for the technology as I had witnessed the incredible damage to equipment and physical infrastructure that this causes. Of course, railroads don't care about any of that. If a remote unit causes a damage or accident, nothing will be done. If a human, does it, they want his head on a silver platter in the Superintendent's office at once. It almost seems to be human nature in some sick way. Nobody really cares if the machine is to blame. I believe Don Henley wrote a song some years back called Dirty Laundry; it is a true testament to the nature of the human animal. At that time the railroad was taking voluntary applicants for remote control class, volunteer or be forced to go. Those are your two options, and it is quite typical behavior for all class one railroads in the USA. I attended the two-week training class locally and excelled during that time. I have always taken my position very seriously; I view my control of the company assets as if they were my own. I always take great care to avoid equipment damage to ensure I don't put anyone else in harm's way. I quickly became very proficient at learning the finer things within the scope of limitations the remote box sets forth. I learned how to manipulate it to limit excessive slack action and how to power brake. Power braking is often frowned upon because it involves setting a first service or higher on the train and then using the locomotives to either push or pull against those brakes. This is typically used in areas where visibility is poor or approaching signals that may require a stop. Not only does this method control slack masterfully, but it also ensures the train brakes are warmed sufficiently for near instant stopping ability on demand.

As time went on, the older employees that I had been brought up with began to retire. Day after day, month after month, and year after year we lost more and more of them. Those of us who were lucky enough to be trained by these men and women had learned what railroading was all about. Oddly enough, we even had old railroad supervisors who knew the finer ways of doing things. They would bring in coffee and doughnuts or breakfast for us. They were leaders, they knew how to motivate their people, but the company didn't like this. There was corruption afoot within the organization. There was a new attitude within the company that was becoming pervasive, and it was spreading like cancer. The old days where supervisors were there to coach and mentor were passing away, instead being replaced with new college educated supervisors who were being taught that the craft employees were their enemy. Everything we did was to harm the company and we were the filth of the earth. We were to be tirelessly watched, pursed, and harassed because somewhere deep inside, they thought each of us wanted to harm NS. Predatory banner tests were to be conducted, saturation teams hid in the weeds at night and snuck up on you, covert radio monitoring was used, and even observing in camouflage suits was employed. I am sure if NS finds out who sent you this letter that I will be promptly retaliated against, even though our representatives sat before you and openly lied saying NS doesn't tolerate that. Such tactics are commonplace across the rail industry, but I can only speak for the NS policies and procedures. I have never seen a company work so diligently at trying to fire the employees it brings in the door, and the rail industry at large shares in this toxic mindset. NS has a long and storied history of abuse of its craft employees. They have

been sued hundreds of times for violations from racism to discrimination and many things in between. Many of these suits are settled out of court so NS can deny having ever committed any wrongdoing, but this doesn't discount the matter at hand. In fact, one supervisor snuck up on a crew in the wee hours of the morning at CP Wye. This location is off the beaten path with no lighting aside from that of the locomotive headlights. There is no reason for someone to come out there and board your locomotive at 1:00AM. As you can imagine, this startled the crew. The supervisor failed to identify himself and was promptly treated as an enemy combatant. He was knocked backward down the stairs of the locomotive cab and back out through the door in which he entered. Company policy forbids us from carrying any type of weapon or self-defense items while on duty. We generally don't lock the doors on the engines and typically don't need to worry about such things, but the new and improved NS was here to stay, and this would become a regular thing. Fortunately, other tools commonly carried to perform the job can quickly be repurposed for self-defense when the need arises. I won't mention what these are as NS will then ban their use since repurposing of any tool for other than its intended purpose is a violation of company policy. Of course, NS sees nothing wrong with their behavior and continues to double down on its abuses despite being scolded and scorned before federal judge's numerous times.

After my promotion to train dispatcher, one other glaring example stands out that really made me question whether I had made the right decision to not only accept this job offer, but to stay here. One evening while working second shift I remember traffic coming west on the Lehigh Line in the vicinity of MP LE 55 was quite heavy. One of our seasoned veterans was behind the throttle of the second westbound train that evening. It was a cold dark night in December right before the Christmas holiday. Everyone on the railroad was getting that giddy childlike feeling of anticipation of the one time each year where we really get to cherish our loved ones. Well, not everyone, management was green with grinch like ideas on how they could try to rain on the holiday spirit. Now, I in no way condone non-compliance with operating rules, they are there for a reason, but they are also one sided, only to be followed when they don't cost the railroad money. There is a signal at CP 53, one at 55, another at 58 where a wayside detector is located, and more beyond that which aren't significant in this instance. Our senior engineer on westbound number two got an APPROACH signal (a solid yellow over solid red aspect) at CP 53 requiring him to be prepared to operate at restricted speed or stop at the MP 55 signal if field conditions required it. As he began slowing the train about halfway through the block, he heard the wayside detector up at MP 58 announce that the train ahead had cleared it with no defects. As was the old school way, he eased off the dynamic brake and allowed the train to continue rolling at a decent clip expecting to have at least an APPROACH aspect at MP 55. Of course, this isn't something you should do because no matter what you hear, you must take the signal for what it displays and treat it as the gospel. While rare, accidents have happened in the past because of just such behaviors. In the weeds up ahead was an NS saturation team. They had erected a STOP OBSTRUCTION sign across the tracks just beyond the MP 55 signal which was displaying a solid RED aspect (RESTRICTING). Failure to stop short of this sign means you've failed to comply with the signal indication and are subsequently dismissed from your job for about a year and a half or terminated completely. Most other railroads would be 30 days off the job before being brought back to work. Why not

take advantage of this time to provide 30 days of remedial training? Under the new and improved NS, only punishment and negative reinforcement are theories understood by management. It is apparent based on this behavior that mental, emotional, and financial abuse are thought to be effective ways to teach employees. Many of us have job income protection insurance that we purchase, so we can pay our bills in such instances. Clearly such policies were not crafted by anyone with a college degree in psychology. While the test yielded some unfortunate results, it's not the fact that it was conducted that is offensive, it is what the managers' said. The chief dispatcher had his office door open when the saturation team called in to tell them what had happened. They said, "we got him, we've gotten one of the best guys out here" to the terminal superintendent whose name I won't mention as he is still employed by NS and has since been promoted multiple times. His response was appalling and abhorrent, he said "good job guys, now he won't be able to buy any Christmas gifts for his kids." My heart sunk, I knew right then that I was no longer dealing with a company that cared about or respected its employees. This toxic work environment that we already had was only going to get worse. Who could say something like that? What kind of mental illness and extreme hate does one have to possess to be happy about something of this nature? At that moment I knew what I was dealing with, it wouldn't be long before they came after me too.

Skipping several more years to 2014, I had now been a train dispatcher for several years and had grown to really enjoy it. Not only did I enjoy coming to work, but I also got exceptionally good at it. Train dispatching is an incredible responsibility. It requires planning, pivoting, and adapting on a moment's notice while working under extreme pressure, not to mention the necessity to know the ever-expanding territories you are qualified on like the back of your hand. Since then, I have learned more than I ever thought possible about how switches, signals, interlockings, grade crossing equipment, and how countless other systems work to allow a 21st century railroad to run safely. I have become a subject matter expert on operating rules and the use of certain types of wayside-signaling equipment to properly protect moves. Many managers view my knowledge as a threat, while they won't admit it, they are fearful that my voice may someday be heard by someone with the power to do something about it. Many of them today are the same college educated people I spoke of earlier. Not to diminish the value of an education, but real-world practical experience on the railroad is far better than any degree regardless of what anyone says. There is an adage that compares street smarts to book smarts. The former of which is most useful in the railroad industry. The degrees many of these folks possess run the gamut from one end of the spectrum to the other, but almost all are unrelated to the business of the railroad. In fact, one new trainmaster called me on a recorded line to ask me which end of the engine the coal went in. Think about that for a minute, which end of the engine does the coal go in? We haven't burned coal in revenue road service on a Class I railroad in America since roughly 1957 when N&W at the time stopped operating its steam locomotives. I was flabbergasted, how in the world could someone like this be in a managerial role for this company? And they wanted us to refer to them as leaders, I don't think so. This practice of hiring and promoting has continued over the years allowing this mentality and lack of knowledge to progress to rather high levels in the company. Today, we see the consequences of those actions and decisions. The only ones that advance are the ones that tow the corporate line. If you're told to lie, you do it, if you're told to fire someone unjustly,

you do it, you never say thank you to your employees, and then when everyone quits and the operation falls apart, you run around and ask why. When your employees tell you the culture has grown so toxic that you're ready to quit, they tell you to go ahead and resign. In contrast, if you tow the corporate line and successfully do all these egregious things, you'll be making \$300,000.00 plus dollars per year or more in no time flat. All of this at a time when our representatives sit before this board and proclaim how great a job with NS is. I couldn't with clear conscience recommend a job with NS to anyone.

As NS adopted a policy of technology first, it became clear that their goal was not to run a railroad with people. Someone thought it would be a good idea to eliminate as many jobs as possible, but only in the craft and agreement ranks. Management jobs are created constantly with some of the most ridiculous titles you've ever heard. I have watched countless cuts over the years both in the field and in the office to dispatchers and other critical positions. Many have been recent since 2018. Consolidations of territories create massive new super-desks that even the best train dispatcher cannot keep up with. Imagine if you overworked or overloaded an air traffic controller in the same manner, the potential for disaster is increased exponentially. Yard crews which handle the switching of inbound trains and setting and pulling of pad tracks for loading, have been decimated. Utility jobs which used to have switches lined and be in position to make cuts and assemble trains while yard crews stood by to swap blocks of cars, have been gutted. Yardmasters managed all of this while teams of in-house mechanical folks ensured cars were safe to be transported. We often used yard crews to recrew mainline trains that got close but didn't quite make it in the door so to speak. Of course, management wanted to hear none of this. Internally we run roughly a three-year cycle on trying the same things repeatedly expecting a different result. This is roughly how long it takes for the promotion cycle to advance the people that couldn't make it work and bring new people in that cannot make it work either, but you won't tell them that. Also noteworthy, this doesn't even begin to scratch the surface on the culture which also exists in Maintenance of Way and Communications and Signals as those employees have also been decimated. Anyone familiar with the history of the rail industry knows what kind of disrepair the rail network was in during the 1970's. We are quickly approaching a repeat of that in 2022.

We used to have a diesel shop at Cresson, PA. It was a common place for the helper sets that battled the Appalachian and Allegheny mountains to be routinely fueled and serviced. A coworker of mine who is mere days from resigning his position with NS after over a decade as a train dispatcher was one of the former employees who worked this area of Pennsylvania. We often had extra helper sets set aside ready to go when we needed to make a quick engine swap. Sometimes we would shove a train up the mountain and bring those engines back for service, fuel, oil, and water if needed and jump on another set standing by on a ready track. The company never realized we managed all of this as dispatchers. We had been brought up by our predecessors to ensure we always had things ready to go at a moment notice. In fact, the machinists who NS thought were unnecessary and whose jobs were abolished as part of PSR did far more than the company thought, to include using their company vehicle to shuttle crews around when taxi cabs weren't readily available. Another facility in Altoona called JBS used to be considered one of the premier diesel shops in America. Many railroads sent their engines to

our facility for testing, rebuilding, or refurbishing. Teams of skilled laborers, machinists, mechanical engineers, pipe fitters, boiler makers, diesel mechanics, and electricians to name a few were employed there. NS has eliminated almost all of them since PSR came about in a town where the railroad is the sole major employer. The closure of the Roanoke shops echoes the same story and was once a vibrant, bustling facility where Norfolk and Western built its own steam locomotives in house and machined its own parts. Among some of the most famous were the J class passenger locomotives of which only one survives today, the N&W 611. The local economies have been gutted all the while NS continues to tout its record profits and tell the board it cannot hire people due to a poor labor market. Almost none of these folks would've left their jobs voluntarily despite our toxic corporate culture, as the railroad was the lifeblood of these towns. Our management is so grossly out of touch that they don't even know what goes on inside the company. They don't know who their good people are, and anyone that is exceptionally good at their job will be mentally and emotionally abused until they don't care anymore. They will have their voice silenced or their light extinguished by middle management fearing that their incompetence may be exposed if someone who excels is permitted to light up an otherwise dark room. Closing of all these facilities along with the consolidation of all our regional field dispatch offices have resulted in more broken-down engines and trains running out of fuel than ever before. The training provided to our new people is a joke. Most of my colleagues wouldn't dare sit down and write a letter like this to expose it for fear of retaliation. Many have no idea what they're looking at aside from what appears to be a video game. No concept of grades, weather, tonnage, physical characteristics, or any of the other things which were common knowledge when I was brought up. It is important to note that this isn't their fault either. You cannot know what you don't know. Oddly, this has a similar ring to the not-so-distant Boeing scandal on the Max aircraft. The regulatory body in charge of ensuring they did their jobs decided to show them leniency. They trusted them to build systems that were safe and worked properly, which proved to be a major mistake. Several crashes, hundreds of deaths, lives altered in ways one cannot explain, and ultimate suspensions in their airworthiness were the outcome of trusting a corporate conglomerate to do what's right. Since this new regime has taken hold, trains run out of fuel constantly resulting in hours or days of delay. Crossings are blocked for hours or even days at a time, and the response from management when they are informed of this is, "so what." Once upon a time our railroad ran so regularly that you could nearly set your watch by our trains. The same trains would be in roughly the same spot on the network at the same time each day.

As part of the technology to replace people initiative NS had invested in a failed program several years earlier known as movement planner that was intended for the airline industry. They had tried unsuccessfully to implement and make this thing work since roughly the time I had started. The program was originally developed over a decade and a half earlier to control air traffic at some of the world's busiest airports. After unsuccessfully testing it and subsequently having the representatives thrown off the property, GE purchased the program and entered a partnership with NS. A few videos are available on YouTube highlighting some of the supposed great features of this system. NS had this vision that we could move more trains more quickly and plan for almost every conceivable event on the railroad, while reducing the number of employees needed to facilitate such movement. The computer would factor a

50,000-foot view of the network and make better moves than even the most senior and qualified dispatcher could. Sounds great, right? Of course, it does, that is what marketing degrees are for. A good salesperson can market anything, because it's all about connecting with your audience and their emotions. In this audience, abolishment of craft jobs was the selling point. So, NS bought it and forced it down our throats. Anyone who voiced a dissenting opinion or said it had issues was told to be quiet and threatened with discipline. I was fired for voicing concerns over the program even after invoking my whistleblower protection rights. The same superintendent who fired me was the one who made the comment about the Christmas gifts. In fact, when Amtrak inquired about why they were suddenly being delayed and getting poor signal indications where they never had before, two of my coworkers told them it was movement planner. They were both threatened and told they were prohibited from telling Amtrak that the reason they were being delayed was this fabulous program that was going to solve all our problems. It is more like movement preventer. The company continues its narrative today. 80% compliance with a supposed master program or discipline even though the routing decisions are always anywhere from four to ten minutes behind current information. Any poor routing choice by movement planner is immediately blamed on "bad data" from the dispatcher. Again, when you have no idea what control is required to manipulate a virtual algorithm to attain a specific result, how can you enter "good data" is what I want to know? I suspect this is being tied to PTC and trip optimizer to "pace" trains when it sees a stop signal ahead. The company will show the board and any agency/inquiry or potential buyer how great this thing is and tout the success they've had with it. What they don't tell you is that statistics are a wonderful thing when you want to spin a narrative, especially when you own all the information. Numerous books have been written over the years exposing these tactics, but people still fall for it every day. It's like the Nigerian Prince scam, one of the most widely documented and communicated scams of the 21st century, and yet every day, it proves successful in swindling people of their hard-earned money. I learned a long time ago that figures lie, and liar's figure. Another thing we "old-heads" know is that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. NS has failed to plan for the unintended consequences of their push for PSR and technology. As a result, we are failing our customers and the economy of these United States of America, but we sure are making Wall Street happy.

As I wrap this up, I will quickly cover one more statement made by a manager in our Network Operations Center and a few other quick observations. During the COVID outbreak we had been temporarily moved to a satellite location and other groups of us split off to other floors of the building to reduce infection rates. A particular supervisor was unhappy with something a new coworker of mine did whilst dispatching and told her "Your mother should've swallowed you". This same supervisor has said things like, "You dispatch like your mother" to employees who have family members in the office and continues to be employed today after several promotions. We had over 360 dispatchers on the roster when we consolidated to Atlanta in 2018. That number has fallen in to the 230 range and continues to decline daily. NS claims this is not their doing at all, the toxic environment they have created is not a contributing factor. Hours of service violations have continued to tick up which has prompted an investigation by the Federal Railroad Administration who came in after a massive COVID outbreak back around Christmas. I got sick at work after coming in and hearing a bunch of

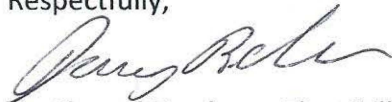
people coughing despite being vaccinated. This was undoubtedly due to the company's stance on not paying people who were sick to be off. All the while the head of the center continued to consolidate dispatcher desks and threaten us with more if we didn't step up and cover our work. He would say things like, "you know once we get rid of work, you're never going to get it back". This same senior manager was recently promoted again for excellence in towing the toxic corporate line.

In the last three years of my career, I have seen more mainline derailments, higher turnover, more mechanical failure, trains running out of fuel, catastrophic engine failure, closure of critical infrastructure, complete failure of infrastructure, and disregard for repair and maintenance of infrastructure, than at any other point in all the preceding years combined. This policy of PSR and shareholder value over all else is beyond dangerous. Warnings are echoed all the time, but nobody ever wants to listen until the accident happens. Graniteville was preventable, but the railroad didn't want to spend the money on switch position indicator signals. The cost of those signals is pocket lint to a railroad as massive and profitable as NS. The Amtrak accident in Cayce, SC was preventable, but a careful read of the conductor's statement who let the switch open reveals a far more heinous undertone regarding PSR policies. If this gross disregard and understanding of the operating rules, egregious violations of the former, total disregard for the critical staff needed to make this run safely, and lack of competence in the specific areas of expertise as well as meaningful oversight continues, there will be another catastrophic event. Everyone thought the Titanic was unsinkable, and there aren't many people that walk the face of the earth today that don't know how that ended. Our railroad is currently being run like an investment banking firm rather than the entity it is. The rules it is required to follow are being ignored, and the American economy is suffering. I implore the board to use whatever authority it must to involve everyone from the White House to the Secretary of Transportation to the Congressional Transportation Committees to get it done. If we want to see meaningful change, let's have Congress enact rules that require minimum rates of pay that keep up with inflation, hold corporate executives and managers personally liable for their actions, and provide for routine and regular oversight to ensure this doesn't continue to happen. Additionally, let's rewrite or redefine the Labor Act of 1926 that lets the railroads refuse to bargain and negotiate with its labor unions by strongarming them using the policies set forth by the government. Also, it is worth noting that our horsepower per ton rules and energy management/trip optimizer is running trains well below track speed. I've had numerous instances of trains doing three to twenty-seven miles per hour on track where the speed limit ranges from 35 to 60 miles per hour. The company continues to tell us these programs work, despite indisputable evidence to the contrary. "We are a technology company that runs a railroad." I am so glad the technology touted as great isn't in many of the products Americans can purchase. If it was, we would rapidly be thrust back to the stone age wondering why square wheels don't turn. We would preach the narrative that this new square wheel is a masterpiece of technology well ahead of its time. It is going to be the catalyst for change in how we do things. It only requires hundreds of times the effort to accomplish the most mundane task, but it has a leg up on the wheel as we know it. Square is the new round.

If we continue to allow the Class I railroads or corporate America for that matter to dictate what they will and won't do, and we continue to allow them to abuse their people, this problem will get much worse. The Federal Railway Labor Safety Act is written such that a railroad must prove its innocence when allegations of abuse are brought rather than the typical innocent until proven guilty practice. This is because their reputations precede them. This almost seems like a strategic plan to eliminate as many senior and experienced people as possible. It can only be because experienced people have more vacation, more sick time, and are paid higher step rate wages than new folks. Each of these premium benefits costs the company valuable shareholder returns. Experienced people will also push back when told to do something they know is wrong. Corporations want "yes" men, people who will do as they're told without realizing they can be held civilly liable for certain types of accidents and violations. Managers continue to use humiliation, harassment, and bullying to force compliance even when their own operating rules clearly spell out such actions are violations of company policy and in some cases federal law. All the while representatives from the railroad sit and openly lie about their supposed intolerance for such actions. The company always protects its own, and I personally struggle with the concept of understanding how these people sleep at night. Their children likely don't know that their parents lie, steal, and cheat for a living. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing strategy, and most unfortunate is that it works.

America is in trouble, we have a toxic and discriminatory culture built on lies and corruption running the lifeblood of the economy, and a regulatory structure that does nothing to stop it. It is high past time for the bodies entrusted with the best interest of our country to step up to the plate and address this. If a smack down and fines are needed, then such action should be swift, decisive, without remorse, and with extreme prejudice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary Becker".

An Abused Employee That Still Cares Enough to Speak Up