



## The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Chairman Peter A. DeFazio  
Ranking Member Sam Graves

### Preventing A Railroad Shutdown: Sick Leave, H. Con. Res. 119

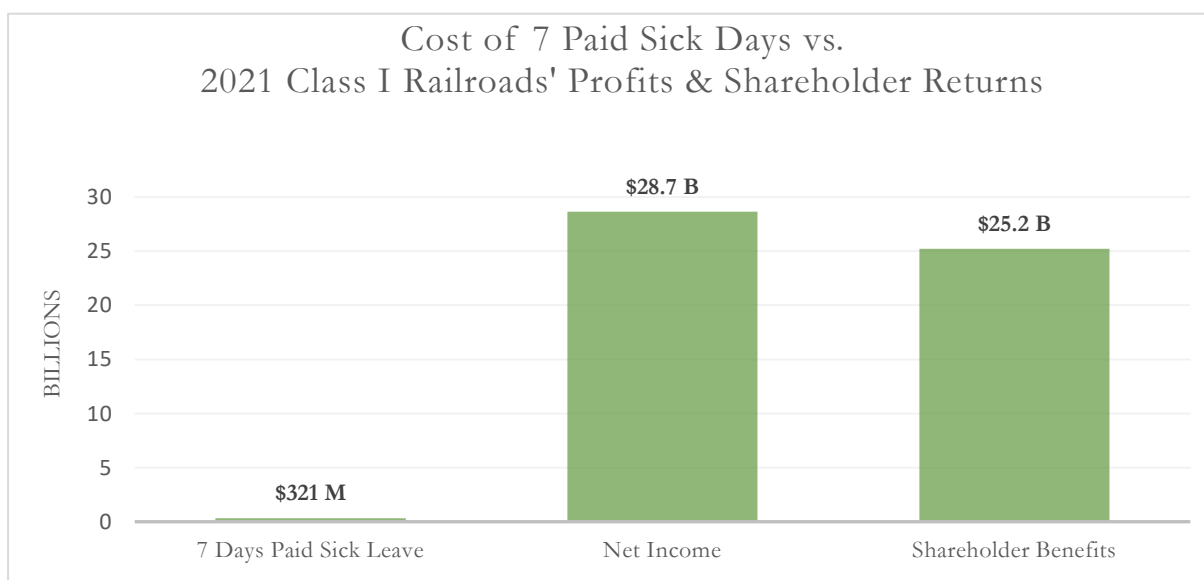
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, & Hazardous Materials | Prepared by T&I Democratic Staff  
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#### ***Essential Freight Railroad Workers Deserve Paid Sick Leave***

- Railroad workers showed up every day during the COVID-19 pandemic, risking their health to keep our nation's freight moving. Railroaders cannot work remotely, some are on-call regularly, and others work outdoors year-round.
- More than 100,000 railroad workers do not have paid sick days, unlike 75% of private industry workers.
- **H. Con. Res. 119 would modify H. J. Res. 100 to ensure freight railroad workers have 7 days of paid sick leave, which can be used without penalty under rail carrier attendance policies.**

#### **The Class I Railroads Are More Profitable Than Ever And Are Expected to Remain Profitable For The Foreseeable Future**

- Class I railroads can afford to act as responsible employers and give their essential workers 7 days of paid sick leave.



- The 7 Class I railroads could have paid for their workers to have 7 days of paid sick leave last year by spending just 6/10 of a penny for every dollar they reported in profit and shareholder returns in 2021.
- The Class I railroads claim that a sick worker can simply use a vacation day when they or a family member are sick or need to see a doctor. But vacation time is not sick time. Workers report being denied vacation time requests because there aren't enough workers to cover shifts. Additionally, workers should not have to substitute vacation days for sick leave. **Without paid sick time, railroad workers are forced to make a choice between their health and their paychecks.**

### The Railroads Drastically Cut Their Workforce

- Under the adoption of a Wall Street business model called precision scheduled railroading (PSR), the **Class I railroads cut their workforce by nearly one-third between 2015 and 2021, forcing more work and longer hours on remaining employees.** Workers report being forced to work multiple consecutive 16-hour shifts, sleeping in cars between shifts, and being on call constantly. Railroading is physically demanding and with so few employees, workers are being pushed to their limits.
- The Class I railroads have cut their workforce so much they can't provide adequate service to customers. In response, **some railroads have implemented harsh attendance policies that penalize workers for unexpected absences, such as calling in sick.** Workers who call in sick face penalties, which can result in disciplinary action, including termination.