

# Oppose Legislative Efforts to Mandate Train Crews Sizes

## Issue

Today, major U.S. freight rail trains on mainline tracks generally operate with two crew members in the locomotive cab — a conductor and an engineer. Proponents of federally mandating two-person crews say it would enhance safety.

## Problem

The mandate is not based on sound science; there is zero evidence that two crew members in a train locomotive would enhance safety. In fact, today's railroads are safer than ever, largely due to technological advances that reduce human error. The U.S. Department of Transportation and other government agencies recognize that encouraging technological innovation advances safety. Legislatively mandating two-person crews in perpetuity would chill new technology developments that could make a safe rail network even safer.

## Solution

Railroads are not seeking to operate with less than two people in the cab haphazardly or unilaterally. Rather, they seek flexibility to continue working with rail labor under the existing collective bargaining framework to identify when conditions could someday allow a responsible reduction in the number of crewmembers without jeopardizing safety.

## Quick Facts

- U.S. railroads had the lowest accident rates ever in 2016, with the train accident rate the lowest in history — down 42% from 2000 — and the employee injury rate down 46% since 2000.
- U.S. passenger trains (including Amtrak) and short line railroads safely operate every day with one person in the locomotive cab. Many foreign railroads — including freight railroads throughout Europe — have safely used one-person crews for decades.
- Since crews consisted of as many as five individuals on one train, crew size has always been an issue of collective bargaining as railroads rightsized crews in a safe manner. Even as crew size has gone down, safety has continued to increase.

## FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

*"[We] cannot provide reliable or conclusive statistical data to suggest whether one-person crew operations are generally safer or less safe than multiple-person crew operations."*

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD CHAIRMAN

*"Based on our limited experience in this and other modes, we don't find that two-person [train] crews offer a safety benefit."*