



## **How CARES Act Affects TD Rail Members**

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On March 27, Congress passed and President Donald Trump signed into law the CARES Act that provides provisions favorable to SMART Transportation Division members as the nation continues to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The bill provides a \$2 trillion relief package to the nation as it copes with COVID-19, the novel coronavirus that has killed hundreds and infected thousands of Americans.

“This bill helps to provide some short-term relief to the transportation industry that has been staggered by the coronavirus,” National Legislative Director Greg Hynes said. “In the event that carriers continue to cut workers or that employees get sick, those workers, including our members, will have extended financial protection. It also gives a financial lifeline to Amtrak as the passenger carrier’s operations have been severely curtailed by the pandemic.”

This relief bill:

- waives the seven-day waiting period for benefits provided under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA).
- provides an enhanced RUIA benefit of \$1,200 per two-week period in addition to regular RUIA benefits.
- extends Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) sickness and unemployment benefits by 13 weeks.
- provides RRB \$5 million in additional grant funds to administer the RUIA.
- provides \$1 billion in funding to keep Amtrak operational to prevent, prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including \$492 million to the Northeast Corridor and \$508 million to support its long-distance service.
- tasks Amtrak with providing congressional reports regarding employee furloughs, if they occur.
- provide relief checks up to \$1,200 per person, \$500 per child. [Click here to calculate your amount.](#)

The economic uncertainty and long-term health risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic present a challenge nationally, and the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), which administers railroad sickness and unemployment benefits, is advising all railroaders to set up a RRB account. [Click here to establish your account.](#)

Due to the IT restraints and volume of contacts to the RRB, members are advised to access the RRB site from a computer, not a phone or tablet. Establishing an account gives workers a head start in the event that RRB unemployment or sick benefits are needed by RR workers in the case of carrier furloughs or illness.

Additional RRB funding and the removal of RRB benefits from the budget sequester implemented by congressional Republicans during the Obama administration may be considered in subsequent relief packages.