

# UNDERSTANDING THE RAILWAY LABOR ACT



After a year of negotiations with Piedmont Airlines, the CWA bargaining committee is asking members to participate in a strike vote. **Only members are eligible to vote, so if you have not signed a membership card contact your steward or Local to get one.**

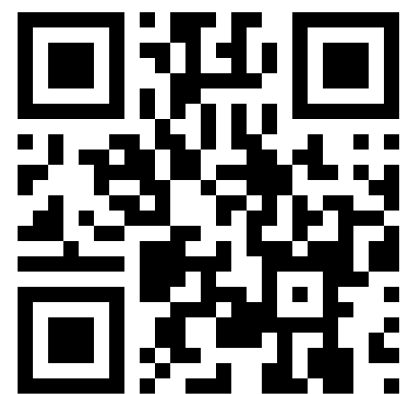
## Your Rights Under the Railway Labor Act:

The Railway Labor Act is the federal law that governs labor relations in the airline industry. It has a specific procedure by which negotiations must be conducted.

Unlike other labor contracts, Railway Labor Act contracts don't expire. Railway Labor Act contracts become amendable.

As a result, the negotiation process for airline labor contracts can take months or even years, and there are many steps in the process before a legal strike can take place.

**Scan to learn more  
about the Railway Labor  
Act & strike process:**



Visit [bit.ly/strike2025](https://bit.ly/strike2025) to vote

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# HOW IT WORKS:



## Exchange of Openers

The union and company exchange opening proposals.

## Direct Negotiations

Negotiations begin across the bargaining table between the union and company.

Direct negotiations are unsuccessful and talks deadlock.

## Mediation

The union and/or company request the National Mediation Board (NMB) to begin mediation within 10 days of the breakdown of negotiation talks.

NMB assigns a mediator and mediation begins. Decision on time limits now lies with the NMB.

## Proffer of Arbitration

Mediation is unsuccessful and talks deadlock. The NMB offers to submit any remaining disputes to binding arbitration.

The union and/or company rejects offer of binding arbitration

## Cooling-off period

The 30-day cooling-off period begins. Mediation talks (supermediation) may continue in an effort to reach an agreement prior to the expiration of the 30 days.

## Work Stoppage/Imposed Work Rules

Parties fail to reach agreement during cooling-off period. Company may implement imposed work rules. Union may go on strike or conduct other job actions.

## Membership Ratification

A tentative agreement is reached. Ballots are sent to each member for membership ratification. If approved by the membership, the agreement goes into effect.

## Binding Arbitration

Union and company accept NMB offer of binding arbitration. Arbitration hearings held and binding award made. **New contract is imposed upon both the union and the company.**

## Membership Ratification

Supermediation is successful. Tentative agreement is sent to membership for **membership ratification vote.**

## Presidential Emergency Board

If a dispute substantially threatens essential transportation, NMB notifies the President who may establish a PEB. PEB has 30 days to report to the president. The parties may accept the recommendations, negotiate their own agreement, or 30 days later, exercise self help.

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