

# **Durbin Meets With Association Of American Railroads To Discuss Employee Benefits**

by Theresa Bordenave

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today met with Ian Jeffries, CEO of the Association of American Railroads (AAR), to discuss improving employee benefits for rail workers, including additional sick leave and personal time. While the most recent rail and labor agreement that Congress approved in December prevented a strike and provided rail workers with the largest wage increase in 50 years,

it did little to reform point-based attendance policies – which enforce attendance by keeping a running tally of absences and tardiness - and penalize workers for taking time off. In the meeting, Durbin urged Jeffries to push the rail industry to explore reforming these personal time and sick leave policies.

Durbin and Jeffries also spoke about the need for continued investment by the freight railroads in the Chicago Region Environment and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, a public private partnership between the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads. The CREATE Program is focused on completing 70 rail projects designed to eliminate freight rail and motor vehicle bottlenecks and decrease congestion, boost the economy of northeastern Illinois, and improve the overall safety and environment of the region.

“Every worker deserves to have available sick leave and personal time as an employee benefit. In my conversation with Association of American Railroads CEO Ian Jeffries, I emphasized that the rail industry must explore, and implement, reforms to the point-based attendance policies that control rail workers’ personal time,” said Durbin. “Our nation relies on the railroad to keep our economy running, and we should be providing rail workers the benefits that reflect that.”