

## **CARES Act Passes**

On March 27, 2020, both houses of Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act passed the U.S. Senate by a unanimous vote, and the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Act via voice vote. President Trump signed the CARES Act into law Friday afternoon, March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provides over \$2 trillion in relief as the nation deals with the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"I am pleased to see Congress working across party lines to provide relief to hard-hit U.S. working people, especially rail workers. I am also pleased this Act provides short-term relief to the transportation industry, including Amtrak."* said BRS President Jerry Boles.

### **The CARES Act provides railroad workers with the following:**

- An enhanced Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) benefit of \$1,200 per two-week period in addition to regular RUIA benefits.
- A 13-week extension of RUIA unemployment benefits.
- Suspension of the seven-day waiting period for benefits provided under the RUIA.

### **Additional highlights of the CARES Act include:**

- \$1 billion in additional funding to help Amtrak respond to the COVID-19 crisis, \$492 million to the Northeast Corridor and over \$500 million to support its long-distance service.
- A requirement for Amtrak to provide Congress reports if employee furloughs occur as a result of COVID-19.
- \$25 billion in additional funding for Transit Agencies (including Commuter Rail) to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Relief checks up to \$1,200 per person and \$500 per child. See the link at the end to estimate your payment.
- \$5 million in additional grant funds to the RRB to administer benefits under the RUIA.

Measures put in place by the federal and state governments to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus is affecting the ability of many people to be at work. As such, the RRB is advising all railroaders to set up an electronic account. Doing so will help expedite the

process should a railroad worker need sickness or unemployment benefits. See the link at the end to sign up for an RRB account.

The BRS continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic closely and will work towards additional relief for railroad workers in future legislation, including the removal of the 7.8% budget sequestration of RRB benefits. Please check the BRS website for updates.

*Estimate your relief [check here](#).*

*Sign up for an RRB account [here](#).*