



December 7, 2009

Machinists Support NMB Voting Rule Change

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. testified today at the National Mediation Board's (NMB) public hearing on the agency's proposed change to rules governing union representation elections.

"Every employee should be allowed to choose for themselves whether to vote yes, no or to abstain in union elections," said Roach. "The government should not employ a process that assigns a viewpoint to voters who do not cast a ballot." The Machinist Union's complete testimony is available at www.goiam.org/transportation.

Currently, the NMB considers eligible voters who do not participate in air and rail union representation elections, for whatever reason, to have voted against unionization. The proposed rule change would allow voters who actually cast a ballot to determine the outcome of the election, as is done in every other union representation and public election in the United States.

"The new rule will not suddenly give unions an edge in elections, as some claim," said Roach. "It will only take the advantage away from the carriers who are opposed to air and rail voters' rights for the same reason people were opposed to guaranteeing voting rights for women and African Americans – they are afraid to upset the status quo and lose the advantages they enjoy at the expense of others."

Thousands of IAM members have already submitted comments to the NMB in favor of the rule change. The NMB is accepting comments until January 4, 2010. Individual comments can be submitted directly through the IAM website at www.goiam.org/nmb.