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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3005

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March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you work on the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, I respectfully urge you to support a \$1 million one-time increase in funding for the National Mediation Board (NMB), for total funding of \$14.205 million, over and above the Administration's FY 2019 budget request of \$13.205 million.

NMB is experiencing a backlog of dispute cases. Given the number of pending cases—currently over 7,400—a modest one-time increase for arbitrator salaries and expenses is warranted. I would additionally request that report language specify that the one-time increase must be used to address the backlog of Section 3 arbitration cases at NMB.

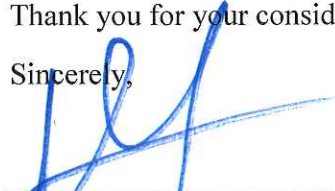
While railroad management and labor work to settle disputes and reduce the need for arbitration at NMB, Section 3 of the Railway Labor Act (45 USC 153) governs “minor disputes” in which a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) already exists but management and labor disagree over the interpretation, enforcement, or applicability of that CBA.

NMB administers Section 3 by appointing neutral arbitrators who hear and resolve minor dispute cases. NMB uses annual appropriations to pay arbitrator salaries and expenses. Without adequate funding, NMB can only pay for a designated number of cases per month and the remaining cases sit idle until funding becomes available. Consequently, cases are severely backlogged.

An efficient, transparent NMB process is in the best interest of the nation's railroads, employees, customers, and ultimately the U.S. taxpayer.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

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