

part of the transportation reauthorization bill with overwhelming support. It is a measured, realistic response to the delayed implementation we have witnessed. Overall, this bill strives to hold the railroads to their safety commitments.

To understand the importance of PTC, we must revisit a terrible tragedy in my State of California, near Chatsworth.

In 2008, a Los Angeles Metrolink commuter train collided head-on with a Union Pacific freight train, killing 25 people and injuring 135 more.

Testimony from the victims who survived the crash paint a gruesome picture of the aftermath. "Severed limbs were strewn all about and blood was pooled everywhere." Victims' bodies, many torn to pieces, had to be extracted from heaps of steel and wreckage.

One passenger described coming across a man who had been crushed by an air vent: "His mangled legs were all I could see, but his cries for help were very loud. Eventually he must have died, as he was calling out for his mother and then no more sounds. [. . .] I was trying to decide if I would die by fire or suffocation of smoke."

Many victims suffered traumatic brain injuries and those sitting at tables suffered "horrible abdominal injuries that cannot be medically resolved." As the National Transportation Safety Board found in its investigation, this terrible tragedy could have been prevented if the Positive Train Control technology had been in place.

Positive Train Control is a system for automatic train safety, which was originally recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board in 1970.

Using GPS and wireless technology, Positive Train Control can automatically put the brakes on trains about to collide or derail. Positive Train Control can monitor trains and stop them if they enter the wrong track or are about to run red lights.

In the Metrolink crash, it was later determined that the engineer was texting, causing him to miss a red signal and cause the deadly collision.

PTC could have prevented this, as it could have forced the train to stop before running onto the same track as the oncoming freight train.

This horrific accident became a rallying cry for Congress, which responded by passing the Rail Safety Improvement Act in 2008.

This legislation mandated the widespread installation of PTC by the end of 2015.

The railroad industry has fought PTC from start. Now, as the deadline rapidly approaches, railroads are again lobbying hard to delay installation. Many have not even begun installing PTC in any form—something that is particularly disturbing to me.

After its terrible accident, Metrolink in California has shown great leader-

ship and plans to be the first railroad to be fully certified. Metrolink is on track to do so by the federally-mandated deadline of December 31, 2015.

Several other railroad companies in California are also on track to begin using PTC this year, in demonstration mode, on the path to final certification. These include the North County Transit District in San Diego and Caltrain in the Bay Area.

In addition, new passenger rail services in California plan to operate with PTC from the first moment that they come on-line, including the Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit line in 2016 and the first High Speed Rail segment in 2022.

California is committed to safe and efficient rail. I believe my State demonstrates that railroads around the country can and should be expected to implement Positive Train Control as soon as is feasible, without unnecessary delay.

The bill that the Senate Commerce Committee recently voted to advance is a no-strings-attached bill that would extend by 5 years the deadline by which PTC must be implemented.

On top of that, it offers railroads an optional extension of an additional 2 years on a case-by-case basis. Extending the deadline through until the outset of 2023.

Effectively, this is just kicking the can down road once more.

I am deeply concerned about this blanket extension. First, it rewards those that have chosen delay over action. More troubling, it could have deadly consequences for Americans across the country.

It has been 7 years since the collision at Chatsworth claimed 25 lives, and 45 years since the National Transportation Safety Board first recommended a system like Positive Train Control.

Unnecessary delay is simply not acceptable.

This is why I am introducing this bill today. I believe it will incentivize railroads to install PTC as quickly as possible.

My bill allows case-by-case, single-year extensions through 2018 for railroads that have demonstrated good faith efforts to implement PTC. It also instructs the Department of Transportation to only grant extensions if the Secretary determines that a railroad's efforts to implement PTC were delayed due to circumstances beyond their control.

In addition, the bill offers a number of other common-sense provisions relating to Positive Train Control requirements and railroad safety. These provisions reflect the lessons we have learned since the Rail Safety Improvement Act first required the implementation of PTC 6½ years ago.

These provisions include bolstering the transparency of railroads' implementation efforts, by requiring regular status reports; and ensuring trains carrying crude oil or ethanol run on tracks with PTC.

The provision requires better coordination between the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Communications Commission to ensure adequate wireless communications availability.

Requiring the Department of Transportation to evaluate the effectiveness of PTC at grade crossings.

Improving opportunities for railroad employees to report safety deficiencies.

Protecting employees in rail work zones.

Improving inspection practices on commuter railroads.

Riding our rails should not be a dangerous activity. It doesn't have to be. If we have the technology to prevent collisions, we must use it.

I urge my colleagues to carefully consider this proposal.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 136—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MAY 1, 2015, AS "SILVER STAR SERVICE BANNER DAY"

Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 136

Whereas the Senate has always honored the sacrifices made by the wounded and ill members of the Armed Forces;

Whereas the Silver Star Service Banner has come to represent the members of the Armed Forces and veterans who were wounded or became ill in combat in the wars fought by the United States;

Whereas the Silver Star Families of America was formed to help the people of the United States remember the sacrifices made by the wounded and ill members of the Armed Forces by designing and manufacturing Silver Star Service Banners and Silver Star Flags for that purpose;

Whereas the sole mission of the Silver Star Families of America is to evoke memories of the sacrifices of members of the Armed Forces and veterans on behalf of the United States through the presence of a Silver Star Service Banner in a window or a Silver Star Flag flying;

Whereas the sacrifices of members of the Armed Forces and veterans on behalf of the United States should never be forgotten; and

Whereas May 1, 2015, is an appropriate date to designate as "Silver Star Service Banner Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the designation of May 1, 2015, as "Silver Star Service Banner Day" and calls upon the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 137—CONGRATULATING THE ADMINISTRATION, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND ALUMNI OF ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSITY

Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to: