



Written by [James Murphy](#) on November 28, 2022

Biden's Boast About Rail Workers Settlement Turns Out to Be False

In September, just in time for the midterms, President Joe Biden crowed about an agreement that his administration had supposedly brokered between railway companies and rail workers unions. In his announcement on the situation, Mr. Biden essentially said that the new agreement was a done deal, and that American families need not be worried about travel snarls or supply-chain issues, at least as it pertained to the railway system.

Unfortunately, in the weeks after the midterms, in which Democrats did surprisingly well, that agreement seems to have been in Biden's mind only, as the unions appear ready to initiate a work stoppage that could affect coming holiday travels and, even worse, make an already tenuous supply-chain situation even worse.

In September, Biden [boasted](#): "The tentative agreement reached tonight is an important win for our economy and the American people. It is a win for tens of thousands of rail workers who worked tirelessly through the pandemic to ensure that America's families and communities got deliveries of what have kept us going during these difficult years."

"These rail workers will get better pay, improved working conditions, and peace of mind around their health care costs: all hard-earned. The agreement is also a victory for railway companies who will be able to retain and recruit more workers for an industry that will continue to be part of the backbone of the American economy for decades to come," Biden claimed.

Unfortunately, that "tentative agreement" appears to have fallen through, and now the president has egg on his face — again — as a potentially ruinous strike may begin in the next several days.

Right now, the administration cannot even clearly state whether Mr. Biden himself is even directly involved in the situation.

On the Tuesday before the Thanksgiving holiday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre repeatedly insisted that Mr. Biden is intricately involved in negotiations.

"As I mentioned, the President spoke to both the unions and the companies yesterday.... We continue to encourage both sides to continue the conversation — the talks — at the negotiation table," Jean-Pierre told reporters. "A shutdown would have tremendous impact on our supply chains, as you all know. It's gonna have a ripple effect into our overall economy."

"The President is indeed involved directly," she claimed. "He has actually been directly involved."



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Jean-Pierre repeated several times that Biden was “directly involved” with negotiations.

Mr. Biden, however, didn’t receive the same talking points. On Thursday, while celebrating Thanksgiving in Nantucket, he told reporters: “I have not directly engaged yet” in the negotiations.

So, did Jean-Pierre tell a “pants-on-fire” lie, or is old Joe simply misremembering yet again? Either way, it’s long since ceased to be surprising when it comes to this White House.

On November 22, rail workers unions voted down the agreement that Biden had allegedly brokered between the two sides. While an increase in pay of approximately 24 percent seems to be agreed upon, the sticking point appears to be paid sick leave, attendance policies, and the lack of paid sick time for short-term illnesses.

“There’s a lot of anger about paid sick leave among the membership,” according to Seth Harris, a professor at Northeastern University.

Apparently, the railway companies are looking for Congress to impose the agreement that the Biden administration claimed to have brokered, with its 24-percent pay increase. Railroads claim that the agreement on the table is the most generous wage package in five decades.

On the other hand, the unions are pressing for the current lame-duck Congress to get involved in negotiations and add more paid sick leave to the package.

“The union needs to get this done in advance of the new Congress,” said Joe Brock of Reliant Labor Consultants.

It’s a strategy that the administration reportedly agrees with, as *The Washington Post* is reporting that Biden plans to announce congressional intervention.

Should a strike occur, experts estimate that the U.S. economy could face a hit of \$2 billion per day as long as the strike goes on.

Unfortunately, with this administration’s outlook on spending, \$2 billion per day is only chump change. And the Democratic lame-duck Congress is likely to side with the unions, to the detriment of the nation.



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