**COALITION MEETING**

**WHITAKER SPEECH NOTES**

Documentation –

In summer 2022 some Legislative Representatives turned in safety issues of NS not adhering to defect detectors rules. What we learned from this was there was no regulation on defect detectors and no enforceability upon the carriers despite having operating rules in place.

I protested FRA and did not like their response. Then began crafting legislation to combat the behavioral issue brought on by PSR.

Media Usage –

Instead of using conventional media, I rolled the dice on using a social media influencer that supported us on our labor rally. We conducted a community outreach in East Palestine and invited this reporter since he is from the area.

Media coverage had begun dyeing down on this event after only five days. Which after seeing people’s lives affected in this manner, we were determined not to let this fall out of view. After a few Tic Tok videos and the amount of hits involved the news media began to pick-up on the story from everywhere.

Successful Legislation –

As for the past two years we changed the way we lobbied at the state house. Instead of lobbying everyone that is friendly to us. I shifted us to lobbying the majority that is well, not so friendly to labor. Along the way we managed to forge new relationships mostly with the freshman politicians or younger generation. This has opened doors that have remained sealed shut.

Investing in the younger generation and focusing on the leadership has been the primary focus. In addition, those that we have invested in we keep a score card on them and discuss before an election cycle.

Closing –

Combine the lobbying efforts and education of safety prior to the derailment. Using the social media outlets and standard media sources to keep the steam up on the topic. Showing how the NS was not being a responsible business for the community before and after the derailment. This compelled law makers to take action, because we did not let the public forget.

Those people we had the discussions with on the score cards, they led the charge on this at the state house.

Point of the story is we coached our Legislative Representatives to notice and investigate the unsafe behaviors going on around them. No matter how insignificant it seems document the matter well, protest the issue to the proper authority, as you never know how useful that can be.

Lobbying, what we done for years didn’t work. So, we took a step back evaluated and ran with a new idea.

But the success of being the 9th state to pass Two-Person Crew and the 1st to pass Wayside Defect Detector language all started with the Local Legislative Reps being engaged. If we had more leaders engaged think of all the success we could have, it takes us all pulling on the rope.