

# Program Letter

United States  
Railroad Retirement Board  
Office of Programs



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Quality Reporting Service Center

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Letter No. 2025-02

Date: January 16, 2025  
[Revised June 11, 2025]

TO: **Certification Registration, Retirement and Unemployment Contact Officials**

SUBJECT: **REEF Act Ends Reduction of Railroad Unemployment and Sickness Benefits**

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**Please distribute this notice to all individuals within your organization who may need the information in connection with their work.**

The Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness (REEF) Act was incorporated into the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, which the President signed on December 23, 2024.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, and subsequent sequestration orders to implement mandated cuts, required that railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits be reduced by a set percentage. This requirement was temporarily paused at the beginning of 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic but resumed on May 10, 2023. Since then, unemployment and sickness benefit amounts paid by the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) had been reduced by 5.7 percent. The REEF Act eliminates that reduction and exempts railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits from sequestration.

Starting on December 26, 2024, the RRB began paying full unreduced benefit amounts; however, the removal of sequestration applied retroactively to May 10, 2023, and previously processed claims needed to be re-determined. Form ID-4E, *Notice of RUIA Claim Determinations* are being issued as usual for all sickness and unemployment claims re-determined for payment of retroactive benefits. The unreduced amount of new sickness and unemployment benefits paid to a claimant will be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance and consequently will be used when calculating the base year employer's experience rated RUIA contribution rate for any future years. Also, the amount of retroactive sickness and unemployment benefits paid to a claimant will be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance.

Employers will receive their Form ID-4E, *Notice of RUIA Claim Determinations* in the same format as they previously chose, by either paper, File Transfer Protocol (FTP) or the Employer Reporting System (ERS).

Employers with questions regarding the removal of sequestration on benefits paid and retroactive benefits paid based on the Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness Act of 2025 should contact the Railroad Retirement Board's Quality Reporting Service Center at (312) 751-4992. Please direct any of your employees with questions about how the REEF Act affected their unemployment or sickness benefits to the FAQ available on the rrb.gov website at [www.RRB.gov/REEFActFAQ](http://www.RRB.gov/REEFActFAQ).