

**Representative Jan Pauls  
785-296-7688  
February 19, 2015**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 164**

**I am testifying today in favor of SB 164 . My interest in the legislation is that my husband spent 39 years in the occupation that is affected by this bill and I have a good understanding of the culture of the railroad and those who handle the rail freight trains for a living. I think this bill is a good piece of public policy and not at all an unnecessary intrusion into private industry. The many recent rail disasters in the news only accentuate how close rail traffic is to public safety issues.**

**One man crews is an idea in the minds of people who are primarily engaged in crunching numbers in offices of the railroad companies. They are looking first at greater profits and bottom line and not the more intangible factors that involve employee safety and public safety. Requiring the railroad to do the right thing goes back to their early days when George Westinghouse had invented the safety air brake system for rail cars. It was ignored for years and the Congress of the United States had to finally pass a law requiring the railroad companies to use this braking system throughout the country to eliminate the disasters of runaway trains.**

**I was very interested in the remarkable outcome of the vote by rail employees when they were given a choice of a substantial pay increase or keeping a minimum two man crew agreement. They chose the safety of the two man crew by ninety percent. That speaks volumes to me, since I know the mindset of railroaders and I trust their judgment about what is important for their personal and family finances versus their safety. They know the extreme variety of situations that can occur every time they go to work. My husband has been out in every imaginable type of weather and at all hours of the day and night and nothing is ever routine. He has had a number of friends who were killed or lost their legs in rail accidents. There is always the possibility**

**of medical issues that come up unexpectedly. When someone is disabled in some emergency situation, public crossings and conflicting rail traffic can be halted for hours. As an example, a Hutchinson railroader was hit with a sudden kidney stone attack a few years ago on a main line train that left him unable to do anything. Had he been alone on the train, there would have been serious problems with getting him to a hospital and getting the train under control.**

**Please pay attention to testimony on the problem of cutting crossings for emergency vehicles. There are many other situations that just can't be done by one person handling a train.**

**Requiring some safety measures from industry is a very common job of the legislature and public safety and personal safety can be anticipated and dealt with by lawmakers.**

**Rep. Jan Pauls  
Hutchinson**