

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

*Full Committee
Nominations Hearing
November 7, 2023*

DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
J. Todd Inman

COVER PAGE

SENATOR RAPHAEL WARNOCK (D-GA)

Blocked Crossings

Blockages of railway-highway grade crossings by stalled or slow-moving trains pose a significant safety risk on multiple fronts. These blockages can prevent emergency services from reaching communities experiencing urgent crises and often force parents and children to traverse dangerous equipment just to make it to school or work. Over the past 12 months, Georgia has experienced the 9th most blocked crossing incidents in the country, according to data from the Federal Railroad Administration.¹

1. Do blocked crossing incidents pose a safety risk?

Response:

Anytime that first responders or safety officials cannot traverse normal roadways or intersections there is a potential for safety responses to be diminished. Railroads need to manage this risk while complying with safety rules that protect their employees.

2. What role can the National Transportation Safety Board play in reducing blocked crossing incidents?

Response:

The NTSB's role in transportation safety is to investigate incidents and make safety recommendations based on the data from that accident or incident investigation. Currently there are no open recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board on this issue. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with you on this issue.

3. If confirmed as a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, what will you do to encourage the reduction of blocked crossing incidents across the country?

Response:

One of the roles board members are tasked with is to be advocates for the safety recommendations made by the NTSB. I would be happy to work with your office to learn about the blocked crossing safety issues facing your constituents.

4. Would the installation of real-time monitoring technology at railway-highway grade crossings improve the safety of our transportation system?

¹ <https://www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings/incidents>

Response:

If confirmed, as part of any accident investigation, I would consider new technology and other potential solutions that could prevent the recurrence of incidents investigated by the NTSB, including incidents at railway-highway grade crossings. After trespassing incidents, grade crossing collisions are the second-leading cause of rail-related fatalities, and working to reduce those tragic incidents is vital.