



NEWS RELEASE

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April 22, 2005

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Transportation Labor Calls for Resignation of Amtrak Board of Directors

Responsible Board Needed to Stop Bush Plan to Kill Amtrak from Within

Washington, DC ... The Amtrak Board of Directors must resign immediately before they succeed in killing Amtrak from within through destructive privatization initiatives, declared the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) today, representing millions of transportation workers nationwide including the vast majority of Amtrak's 20,000 employees.

"The Board has clearly violated its fiduciary responsibilities by unveiling legislative reforms on Capitol Hill yesterday designed to destroy the very company it has a duty to preserve," said TTD President Edward Wytkind, following a teleconference with rail union leaders and Amtrak Chairman of the Board David Laney and CEO David Gunn. "These Board members – heavy contributors to the Bush campaign – should be responsible and independent, not lapdogs to this Administration. Having failed the test of independence, they should resign to save Amtrak from itself and from the Bush Administration."

David Gunn's flip-flop on the best course needed to ensure a national Amtrak system is also stunning to Amtrak's employees. In response to Amtrak privatization proposals, the candid David Gunn told Harvard Magazine in 2002, "It all sounds nice, but when it's done, there won't be any service."

"We agree with *that* David Gunn," Wytkind said. "If the Amtrak Board's proposal to subject Amtrak to senseless privatization is adopted, 'there won't be any service' and 25 million Amtrak passengers, communities nationwide and 20,000 workers will suffer the consequences."

Any CEO of Amtrak must disavow any support for the Bush Board's recommendation to break-up Amtrak's national system and dump the responsibility of funding passenger rail on cash-strapped states. "This management team should stick to its guns and tell the truth as it always has about the folly of privatization or step aside for someone who will," Wytkind added.

Transportation unions also called on Congress to reject the Board's proposal directed at Amtrak employees including calls for direct congressional interference in labor-management negotiations at Amtrak and for repeal of pension, disability, unemployment, survivor, and worker injury protections for thousands of Amtrak employees.

"The Board's attempt to make scapegoats out of Amtrak employees is unconscionable and to no one's surprise borrows a page out of this Administration's anti-labor handbook," Wytkind said. "We will fight with every ounce of our energy to protect the jobs and rights of Amtrak workers and the 25 million passengers they serve."

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