



# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Transportation Trades Department Outlines Agenda in 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting**

*Executive Committee Members are Joined by DOT Sec. LaHood, Rep. Oberstar, and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka*

Orlando, FL – Transportation union leaders gathered Sunday to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) and to discuss their agenda for the upcoming year. Joined by Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar, and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, the group of 32 unions discussed important policy issues and conducted elections for its leadership.

“In tough economic times, transportation workers help keep their local economies healthy, while building the infrastructure America needs to compete in the global economy,” said Secretary LaHood. “Workers represented by the Transportation Trades help to keep Americans safe and moving forward on planes, trains, buses, ships and automobiles.”

“Transportation holds America together. Our highways, railroads, airways, waterways, ports and mass transit make us one nation, instead of a patchwork of 50 individual states,” Oberstar said. “However, it is the men and women who build, operate, and maintain these systems that make American transportation work. We, as a nation, owe a great debt to them, and to their collective voice, TTD.”

“For 20 years, the Transportation Trades Department has brought the voices of transportation workers to the debate,” said Edward Wytkind, president of TTD. “Moving forward, we will continue this important work. We will insist that the interests of workers are protected and represented as Washington writes the laws and regulations that affect transportation workers and the system in which they work.”

In TTD’s officer elections, Wytkind was re-elected as President. He has been president of the organization since 2003, and served as its executive director for 13 years before then. Larry Willis was elected as Secretary-Treasurer, effective April 1. Willis is currently and will continue to serve as TTD’s chief of staff and general counsel. He will replace outgoing TTD Secretary-Treasurer Patricia Friend, President of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), who will retire from the AFA toward the end of the year.

TTD’s executive committee adopted a strong statement in support of the 600 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 30. These workers at a borox mining plant in Boron, California have been locked out by employer Rio Tinto, which is trying to force

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President • Patricia Friend, Secretary-Treasurer



an extremely concessionary contract on the workers. TTD leaders also discussed priority issues and approved full policy statements that can be found at [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).

“With national unemployment still at record levels, transportation workers need jobs and transportation investments are a proven way to create them,” Wytkind said. Additionally, “this past year has been rife with examples of the need to strengthen safety and security in our transportation systems. From the underwear bomber to several rail transit accidents to pirate attacks on U.S. mariners, we will continue to advocate for safety and security standards that address the realities workers face and that serve the public interest.”

As articulated in policy statements, TTD will work for progress on the following issues:

### **Creating jobs by rebuilding our transportation network**

Job creation began with the Recovery Act, which created and saved millions of jobs. But the work is not done. Workers need swift action on a robust jobs bill and additional investments in transportation programs with a proven history of job creation. More delay and partisan quarreling will not put a single American to work – significant investment in our transportation system and infrastructure will. <more>

### **Constantly evaluating and upgrading aviation security**

The attempted terrorist attack on Christmas Day 2009 was a clear reminder that our aviation system remains a target of extremist aggression and that security procedures must continually be evaluated and upgraded to meet emerging threats. Aviation workers understand the security vulnerabilities that exist in our system and have been vocal advocates for closing known loopholes, greater federal investments in screening and other technologies, and forward-looking policies to meet the evolving security challenges we face. One lesson learned from the December 25<sup>th</sup> attack is that terrorists will not hesitate to attack a U.S. carrier by circumventing security procedures at foreign locations. This bolsters the argument that one level of security must be required of all contract aircraft repair stations, where a growing percentage of maintenance and repair work is now done on U.S. passenger aircraft. <more>

### **Federal jurisdiction over rail transit safety**

Recent accidents at transit agencies in Boston, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. illustrate a clear need for increased federal safety oversight of rail transit operations. It is significant that the Obama DOT is seeking to regulate rail transit safety, consistent with the historic role it has played in safety oversight of commercial airlines and freight and passenger rail operations. We applaud the Obama Administration for its work on this initiative but urge the DOT to listen to the input of front-line employees and their unions and consider carefully the financial realities facing public transportation agencies across the country. <more>

### **Protecting workers in international aviation trade agreements**

Globalization of our aviation system is posing new challenges for our government and Congress. As the United States enters into new and expanded international aviation agreements, these agreements must be balanced, legitimately promote U.S. aviation, and protect the interests and jobs of U.S. aviation workers. While we support efforts to create

additional international opportunities for U.S. carriers, these opportunities cannot come at the expense of U.S. airline jobs, collective bargaining rights, and safety and security standards that are so important to our aviation system. We also urge the Obama Administration to clearly state its opposition to relaxing our foreign ownership and control rules, not only in the context of U.S.-EU talks but as the U.S. prepares for open skies talks with China later this year. <more>

### **Protecting the maritime industry and its workers from pirates**

Last year, two U.S.-flag ships, the LIBERTY SUN and the MAERSK ALABAMA, were attacked by heavily armed pirates off the coast of Somalia while transporting humanitarian aid on behalf of the U.S. government. Transportation labor urges the U.S. government to prevent acts of piracy in the short-term through immediate military and other government assistance and over the long-term through international engagement. Specifically, transportation labor believes the most effective means to prevent and repel acts of piracy is for our government to immediately provide U.S.-flag vessels operating in high risk waters with on-board armed force protection. <more>

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*The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).*