



NEWS RELEASE

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**AFL-CIO Transportation Union Leader
Condemns Latest White House Plan to Kill Amtrak
"Reforms" Would Send 20,000 Workers to Unemployment Lines**

Washington D.C. -- *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, in reaction to today's unveiling of the Bush Administration Amtrak "reform" plan.*

"Only in Washington would you try to save Amtrak by killing it. A nation of travelers, workers, and already-struggling cities and states would pay the price for this bizarre logic.

"The White House is making the facts fit the story it wants to tell, and along the way a few essential truths have fallen by the side of the tracks. First, a federal-state partnership for passenger rail is a myth, as cash-strapped states cannot be expected to pick up the tab for a railroad the government wants to get rid of. Second, buzzwords like 'periodic competition' sugarcoat the reality that privatizing rail in England and elsewhere has led to rampant delays, steep fare increases, and higher accident rates. And third, the Bush plan places the entire Amtrak system on the chopping block, threatening rail service for 24 million passengers and the jobs and railroad retirement benefits of 20,000 Amtrak workers.

"The Bush Administration's timing is suspect. Only after its Amtrak-killing budget plan last week got worse reviews than 'Gigli' do they put forward yet another hollow 'reform' plan. They missed a chance to show real leadership – a plan to save, not scapegoat Amtrak – instead rolling out a retread that is out of step with both Congress and the American people.

"Starving Amtrak, then blaming it for not having enough money is not only flawed policy, but is also insulting to Amtrak workers and their 24 million passengers."

TTD represents 35 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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