



NEWS RELEASE

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Administration's Amtrak Funding and Privatization Scheme Must be Rejected

Most Amtrak Workers Now in Their 8th Year Without a Wage Increase

Washington, D.C. – Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, testified today before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. He focused on the Administration's gross lack of understanding of passenger rail's importance to our nation's transportation system and economy, demonstrated by the White House budget proposal.

Below are excerpts from his statement:

"For FY 2008, the Administration has once again submitted a budget request, at \$800 million, that is nothing more than a shut down number. As members of this Committee have already observed, this is asking the carrier to do the impossible and should be rejected."

"The Administration would expect Amtrak to find others, including private entities, to provide the service that Amtrak is currently charged with providing. This isn't a funding plan – it's a path to privatization and ultimately the destruction of Amtrak as we know it."

"Most of Amtrak's employees are entering their eighth year without a general wage increase and have seen their employer, especially its Board of Directors, turn on them repeatedly ... We hope this Committee will insist that new contracts get settled and that Amtrak stop this cycle of securing federal funding but refusing to provide its workforce with reasonable wage increases."

"Deferred maintenance, unmet security needs, outdated cars and equipment and unfairly treated and compensated employees whose morale has reached an all-time low are the norm ... Forcing Amtrak to limp from one financial crisis to the next with no long-term funding plan is a recipe for failure that can no longer be tolerated.

"Amtrak is part of our vast network of publicly supported transportation services. No mode of transport in America can succeed without some form of public subsidy ... Economic powers and emerging nations around the globe spend

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billions on passenger rail because they know that a strong economy is dependent on a strong transportation system and infrastructure. There is no substitute for a transportation system that can move our people and goods safely and efficiently.”

The full written comments submitted to the Subcommittee will be available at www.ttd.org.

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