



March 26, 2007

Support the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and the millions of workers in the transportation industry represented by our 32 member unions, I write to urge you to vote for the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007 (H. R. 1401) when it is considered on the House floor on Tuesday. H.R. 1401 will make needed and long overdue security investments in public transportation and will ensure that workers can become true partners in addressing security vulnerabilities.

Protecting mass transit, freight and passenger rail and over-the-road bus operations is an important element in our nation's homeland security that has been sorely lacking for far too long. With this bill, Congress will make a down-payment on protecting from terrorist threat the millions of passengers who rely on mass transit, bus and rail every day. This nation's rail and public transportation systems present a tempting target and one difficult to secure. While eliminating all security risks will be impossible, this measure will help address the many vulnerabilities in this vast system.

Specifically, the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act provides for mandatory, comprehensive security training for front-line workers. This will help employees understand how to identify risks and respond in case of a threat or attack. Security experts and policy makers agree on the value of training programs for workers in all modes of transportation including those covered by this bill. Yet we know from experience that unless universal and national standards are established and training made mandatory, this most basic security protocol will not be implemented across the board. This is unacceptable and TTD is pleased that this bill would address this deficiency.

This bill also enhances whistleblower protections so that workers can be free to report security concerns without fear of retaliation or harassment from employers. Providing workers protection from harassment and intimidation is an essential element in improving transportation security. No worker should ever have to choose between keeping his or her job and protecting the traveling public and H.R. 1401 will help ensure that workers will not have to make this choice.

Finally, this bill provides \$7.3 billion to public transit agencies, Amtrak, bus operators and other providers of rail and public transportation with needed funds to make critical security upgrades. The fact is that rail and transit have been grossly under-funded in terms of security since 9/11 and it is past time that Congress move to correct this imbalance and neglect.

Ensuring the security of America's transportation network is essential to the lives and livelihood of the millions of workers TTD represents. On behalf of transportation labor, I urge you to support the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act and to oppose any amendments that would weaken this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", is written over a white background.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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