



NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Unions Vow to Educate Members on Why Barack Obama is the Best Choice

Washington, DC – The Executive Committee of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) today vowed to educate transportation union members on Sen. John McCain's poor transportation record and Sen. Barack Obama's vision for a safe and expanded transportation system in America.

"The worst transportation presidency in modern history is coming to a close," said TTD President Edward Wytkind. "John McCain promises us four more years of the same: neglect, under-investment and a lack of leadership."

"Barack Obama wants to expand and rebuild our transportation system and will support and empower the men and women who operate, build and maintain it," Wytkind said.

TTD spent several months examining Sen. McCain's votes, speeches and statements in an effort to paint a clear picture of what transportation workers and the public could expect from a McCain Administration. Similarly, TTD examined Sen. Obama's record and positions on transportation and worker issues throughout his career, and the difference between the two candidates is stark.

At its Executive Committee meeting today, TTD and its 32 member unions discussed the most comprehensive overview to date of Sen. McCain's 25 years of transportation votes. The research reveals a politician who doesn't understand the severe transportation investment gap that is threatening our economy – and routinely calls these crucial investments wasteful spending. The research also revealed his history of opposing job creation and collective bargaining rights of transportation workers.

"What we found in Sen. McCain is a politician who's routinely on the wrong side of finding solutions to America's severe transportation problems," Wytkind said. "By opposing critical investments in our aging transportation system and refusing to support much needed safety and security reforms, John McCain does not represent the type of change needed to bring lasting improvements to our deteriorating transportation system."

"Barack Obama is the only candidate in this race talking about rebuilding our infrastructure, dealing with key safety and security issues, supporting the rights of workers, and creating jobs," Wytkind said. "On every one of the issues we examined, Barack Obama stands with the American public and American workers in delivering a safer, more efficient transportation system for the future."

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“And Sen. Joe Biden as Vice President will clearly add to the promise of an Obama Administration. Sen. Biden is a longtime supporter of strengthening workers’ rights, a vocal proponent of boosting investment in Amtrak, and advocates closing security gaps in our transportation system.”

Below are examples of the McCain and Obama records:

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS AND WORKER PROTECTIONS:

- Sen. McCain is an opponent of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) – “card-check” labor law reform legislation. He sponsored legislation to gut the collective bargaining rights of private sector aviation workers and refused to support legislation that would fix the broken collective bargaining system at the FAA.¹
- Sen. Obama has co-sponsored and voted for EFCA and vowed to sign it into law. He pledged to appoint NMB members who support the rights of workers to organize. He also introduced legislation to restore the bargaining rights of FAA workers and stop the FAA from imposing contract terms on employees without their consent.²
- Sen. McCain has also supported legislative attacks on transit workers’ bargaining rights and construction workers’ prevailing wage protections.³
- Sen. Obama has also vowed strong support for the continuation of transit and construction workers’ bargaining rights and prevailing wage protections when the federal government invests in transit and highway projects.⁴

MASS TRANSIT AND HIGHWAY INVESTMENTS:

- Sen. McCain has repeatedly opposed expanding our mass transit systems and repairing crumbling highways and bridges. He was one of four Senators to oppose the largest highway and transit investment bill in American history.⁵
- Sen. Obama has voted in favor of transit and highway investment bills to create jobs, boost our economy and improve our transportation system. He also has unveiled proposals to put Americans to work and rebuild our infrastructure.⁶

AVIATION:

- Sen. McCain voted against safety and security standards for U.S. aircraft repairs performed in third-world countries.⁷
- Sen. Obama supports forcing foreign aircraft repair stations to submit to routine safety inspections and requiring the same drug and alcohol testing performed on U.S. workers.⁸
- Sen. McCain supports foreign ownership and control of U.S. airlines, and foreign airlines providing service within the U.S., saying that the existing restrictions “should be relaxed.”⁹
- Sen. Obama is against the foreign takeover of U.S. airlines and committed to work to ensure that foreign investors will remain minority shareholders. He also pledges to uphold cabotage laws, which ensure that U.S. airlines operate domestic point-to-point service.¹⁰

RAIL:

- On Amtrak, Sen. McCain has supported and sponsored several amendments to eliminate or gut Amtrak funding and said "I will do everything in my power . . . to see that it comes to an end."¹¹
- Sen. Obama is a strong supporter of federal assistance for Amtrak, saying "with the gas prices what they are, we should be expanding rail service," not eliminating it.¹²

PORTS AND MARITIME:

- Since 9/11, Sen. McCain has repeatedly opposed funding to secure U.S. port facilities, and called increased cargo screening an example of wasteful spending. He has called for the repeal of the Jones Act, a longstanding law which ensures a strong U.S. Merchant Marine.¹³
- Sen. Obama has consistently voted to improve port security, and has pledged to oppose any efforts to undermine the Jones Act.¹⁴

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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.

1 H.R. 800, Vote #227, 6/26/07; S. 1327, 8/2/01; Refused to cosponsor S. 2201, 2006.

2 S. 1041, 3/29/07; S. 842, 4/19/05; H.R. 800, Vote #227, 6/26/07; S. 1041, 3/29/07; Obama for America website, Economy; Obama Senate Press Release, 6/20/07; Sen. Obama Letter to Northwest Airlines Flight Attendants, 9/8/08; TTD Presidential Questionnaire 2008; S. 2201, 1/26/06.

3 Gramm Amdt. to H.R. 2, 2/04/87; S. Amdt. 1844 to S. 1650, Vote #320, 10/7/99; S. Amdt. 4031 to S.Con.Res. 57, Vote #134, 5/22/96; S. 1533, 1/26/96; S. 141, 8/9/95; S. Amdt. 1730 to S. 2019, Vote #119, 5/18/94; S. Amdt. 1851 to H.R. 5132, Vote #105, 5/21/92; S. Amdt. 51 to H.R. 1281, Vote #35, 3/20/91; S. Amdt. 2052 to S. 566, Vote #122, 6/21/90; S. Amdt. 765 to H.R. 2916, Vote #181, 9/19/89; S. Amdt. 33 to S.4, Vote #36, 4/12/89; Gramm Amdt., 9/29/87; Dickinson Amdt. to H.R. 4428, Vote #406, 8/15/86; Walker Amdt. to H.R. 10, Vote #239, 7/12/83.

4 TTD Presidential Questionnaire 2008; Remarks for Senator Obama: Building Trades National Legislative Conference, 4/15/08; S. 1749, 9/2/05; HB 3048, 2003, SB 1212, 2003; HB 2255, 1999.

5 H.R. 3, Vote #220, 7/29/05; Press Release, "Statement of Senator John McCain on the Conference Report Accompanying H.R. 3, SAFETEA-LU," 7/29/05; H.R. 2360, Vote #184, 7/14/05 Press Release, "S. 2537 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2005," 9/15/04; S. 107, Vote #14, 2/12/04; Press Release, "Pork Barrel Spending in Homeland Security Appropriations Bill," 7/28/03; S. Amdt. 358, S.Con.Res. 23, Vote #79, 3/21/03; Veto Override to H.R. 2, 4/2/87; H.R. 1335, Vote #105, 4/21/93; H.R. 1718, Vote #19, 3/03/83.

6 Obama for America website; S. 1926, 2/14/08; H.R. 3 Vote 200, 7/29/05; SB 1028, 1999.

7 S. Amdt. 914 to S. 824, Vote #224, 6/12/03.

8 S. 3090, 6/5/08; S. Amdt. 4689 to H.R. 2881, 5/5/08; TTD Presidential Questionnaire 2008.

9 S. Amdt. 3619 to H.R. 4939, 4/26/06; ALPA Presidential Survey, Air Line Pilot, 2/00.

10 ALPA Presidential Questionnaire 2008; TTD Presidential Questionnaire 2008.

11 CQ Weekly Transportation, 11/15/97.

12 TIME's The Page by Mark Halperin, "Barack and Michelle Obama Lunch with Couple in Beech Grove, Indiana."

13 S. Amdt. 4930 to H.R. 4954, Vote #248, 9/14/06; S. Amdt. 3034 to S.Con.Res. 83, Vote #59, 3/16/06; S. Amdt. 3054 to S.Con.Res. 83, Vote #47, 3/15/06; S. Amdt. to H.R. 2360, Vote #185, 7/14/05; Press release, "Pork Barrel Spending in Homeland Security Appropriations Bill." 7/28/03.

14 TTD Presidential Questionnaire 2008, S.Amdt 4930 to H.R. 4954, Vote #248, 9/14/06; S. Amdt. 3034 to S.Con.Res. 83, Vote #59, 3/16/06; S. Amdt. 3054 to S.Con.Res. 83, Vote #47, 3/15/06; S. Amdt. to H.R. 2360, Vote #185, 7/14/05.