



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Momentum Growing Against Bush Plan to Kill Amtrak *House Panel Approves Pro-Amtrak Bills; Rail Workers Mobilize***

**Washington D.C.** -- Momentum is growing against the White House plan to bankrupt Amtrak, Edward Wytkind, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department said today, citing both House committee approval of two passenger rail bills and the mobilization of transportation workers against the Bush plan. On Thursday, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, a division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, will leaflet Amtrak passengers at Union Station in Washington.

Earlier today the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously adopted two pieces of legislation -- H.R. 1630, authorizing \$6 billion over three years to improve Amtrak infrastructure and service, and H.R. 1631, developing new high-speed rail networks.

"Chairman Don Young and the committee's ranking Democrat, Jim Oberstar, turned away from all the sound and fury coming out of the White House and the Amtrak Board and instead acted in the best interests of a nation clamoring for better -- not worse -- rail transportation. Both the traveling public and rail workers owe them a debt of gratitude for their leadership on today's votes," Wytkind said.

Last week the Amtrak Board of Directors -- comprised exclusively of Bush campaign donors -- turned on its own passengers and workers by echoing the White House call to break up Amtrak, privatize key routes, and pass along costs to cash-strapped states. The Board called for direct congressional interference in labor-management negotiations at Amtrak and for repeal of pension, disability, unemployment, survivor, and worker injury protections for thousands of Amtrak employees.

AFL-CIO rail unions have demanded the resignations of the Board's members, saying they have abandoned both their fiduciary responsibilities and the interests of Amtrak customers and workers. "We need Board members who place a greater loyalty toward the traveling public than to the politicians who put them there," Wytkind said.

The Thursday morning leafleting at Union Station is part of an ongoing grassroots efforts by rail workers nationally, a campaign which will include a lobbying week on Capitol Hill in late May.

*TTD represents 35 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).*

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