



October 22, 2009

Oppose the Mica Amendment to the Coast Guard Authorization Bill

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to oppose the Mica amendment to the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (H.R. 3619). TTD also supports final passage of the underlying bill and the Manager's amendment to be offered by Chairman Oberstar.

The Mica Amendment would allow states and local governments to impose additional and duplicative security background checks on workers who have access to vessels and port facilities. These workers are already required to hold a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) and pass an extensive security vetting process that includes a criminal background check. One of the objectives of the TWIC program was to create a national security standard along with a national credential that would be accepted throughout the U.S. maritime industry. If states and others are allowed to impose different security standards, a worker who holds a TWIC and works at one port might be unable to enter other ports or vessels located in different jurisdictions. The patchwork of credentials and security checks that would be created by the Mica amendment is inconsistent with the national scope of the TWIC program and would impose additional fees on workers and their employers.

Finally, the Mica amendment would undermine language originally introduced by Rep. Castor that seeks to limit state and local security checks. This language has already been approved by the House as part of the TSA Reauthorization bill and is included in the Manager's amendment to H.R. 3619. Specifically, this language would prohibit a state or local government from adding on a separate security check for a purpose for which a federal transportation security card has already been issued. This clarifies that workers, for example, who have already applied for and received a TWIC should not be subject to additional and duplicate security checks for entering a port or a maritime vessel. This is a modest prohibition and can be waived by DHS if a state can demonstrate a compelling homeland security reason for imposing additional security checks.

Again, I urge you to oppose the Mica Amendment and vote for the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (H.R. 3619) when it is considered on the House floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", written over a horizontal line.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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