



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Transportation Labor Urges Action on Stalled-Out Legislation, Vows to Protect Aviation Workers Harmed by International Joint Ventures**

WASHINGTON, DC – Transportation union leaders are urging action on key transportation legislation that, if delayed further, forestalls needed improvements to our nation's aviation and surface transportation systems and eliminates a major source of job creation so badly needed across the country. In their annual fall meeting today, leaders of the 32 unions that comprise the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) also agreed to enlist the help of Congress to protect aviation workers from international joint ventures that give U.S. carriers additional ways to outsource jobs.

"Our focus is always on creating and preserving good jobs, but it is especially relevant during these tough economic times. Transportation unions are looking for every opportunity to put workers back to work, and to protect those who are getting paychecks," said Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO. "With unemployment still too high, we just can't support postponing overdue transportation legislation that would invest in America and create millions of jobs."

The TTD Executive Committee welcomed as its guest speakers Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), John Porcari, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Deborah Hersman, Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, and Elizabeth Shuler, the newly elected AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer.

The TTD Executive Committee focused on an agenda that includes completing the overdue multi-year Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill – already extended seven times by Congress – and the surface transportation reauthorization that expired September 30. TTD affiliates discussed the troubling trend of international joint ventures in aviation that, if left unchecked by Congress, could cause further job loss among U.S. pilots, flight attendants and ground crew. The Executive Committee also focused on a strategy for the ongoing national high speed rail initiative focusing on the need to create good jobs, ensure compliance with key worker protection requirements and rail statutes, and fully utilize Amtrak and its veteran workforce for new high speed rail systems.

Evidenced by seven short-term funding extensions, Congress has been unable to complete work on the FAA reauthorization. These delays have left many safety, infrastructure, technology and worker rights issues unaddressed. Meanwhile, until Congress acts, FedEx will continue to use its special treatment under our labor laws to deny its truck drivers and mechanics the right to form unions.

"The flying public as well as private and public sector aviation workers cannot afford more political gridlock in completing this important legislation," Wytkind said.

Some want to defer action on a multi-year surface transportation reauthorization bill until 2011. While the economic stimulus bill focused on short-term job growth and addressing immediate infrastructure needs, the reauthorization bill would build on that effort and create or sustain six million good jobs in six years. Transportation labor – and many business groups including the Chamber of Commerce – endorses an increase to the fuel tax to raise the revenues needed to address an investment deficit that will cost \$1.8 trillion to fix, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

“Americans suffering in this recession can’t wait until 2011 for job opportunities,” Wytkind said. “Our transportation system and infrastructure are plunging into a state of severe disrepair and can’t wait two years or longer for new investments.”

As U.S. air carriers engage in international joint venture agreements, American workers must be protected. Some U.S. carriers are looking to exclusively outsource flight operations to their foreign partners to boost profit margins. Pilots, flight attendants and ground workers could see their employers become “ticket agents” for their foreign flying partners, and will see their work hours cut as foreign carriers turn to their own employees – or others – to perform the work. Congress must step in to protect U.S. aviation workers.

“This isn’t hyperbole – in United’s joint venture with Aer Lingus, all the flights will be advertised as United’s but in reality Aer Lingus aircraft and employees will be used,” Wytkind said. “Congress must act to prevent U.S. airlines from using these ventures to offshore jobs.”

On high speed rail, the Executive Committee vowed to push for Amtrak as the centerpiece of the historic high speed rail transportation program initiated by President Obama. TTD affiliates also reaffirmed the need for federal transportation regulators to vigorously enforce the rules and regulations attached to the high speed rail program.

“Amtrak is the only legitimate provider of true high speed rail in this country,” Wytkind said. “And Amtrak workers have the skills and experience necessary to deliver on the President’s vision for a new era of high speed rail in America.”

To read the policy statements that were approved on each of these issues, please visit [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).

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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](http://www.ttd.org).*

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