



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 3, 2008**

**CONTACT: Jenifer McCormick**  
**202-628-9262 – office**  
**202-340-5351 – cell phone**  
[JeniferM@ttd.org](mailto:JeniferM@ttd.org)

## **Transportation Labor Outlines Key Issues in Leadership Meeting**

SAN DIEGO – Holding Amtrak accountable to its new contractual obligations, defending aviation employees against airline mergers and protecting transportation workers from the harmful effects of unfair trade policies are among transportation unions' top priorities, as discussed at the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO's annual winter meeting on Sunday. Leaders of the 32 unions that comprise TTD also discussed the records and views of the leading presidential candidates.

"For the next 246 days, we will research and disseminate information to transportation workers about the records and views of Senator McCain and the eventual Democratic nominee," said Edward Wytkind, President of TTD. "Workers need to know that Senator McCain's transportation labor record leaves a lot to be desired."

In addition to Amtrak, airline mergers, and protecting transportation workers from unfair trade policies, the transportation union leaders approved several policy statements that reflect an expanded legislative agenda for the organization – in addition to core legislation such as Federal Aviation Administration, Amtrak and rail safety reauthorization bills. They include updating the Family Medical Leave Act to cover flight attendants and pilots; eliminating duplicative background checks and fees for port and other workers; and stopping the cross-border trucking pilot program and any expansion to foreign bus operations. Policy statements were agreed to for each of these issues and can be viewed in full on [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).

Transportation unions vowed to fight for adequate federal funding to ensure Amtrak lives up to the back-pay obligations owed to employees in recently completed collective bargaining agreements.

"We will look to Congress to ensure that Amtrak has sufficient funding to meet its contractual obligations to its employees and to operate a safe and efficient railroad," Wytkind said.

TTD member unions heard from aviation union leaders about the state of current merger talks between various air carriers and the possible impact on jobs and collective bargaining rights.

"We will move forward together to defend aviation workers in this current feeding frenzy of airline merger talks," Wytkind said.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program has been under-funded for too long and has failed to protect transportation and other service sector workers harmed by trade policies.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

888 16th Street, NW • Suite 650 • Washington, DC 20006 • tel: 202.628-9262 • fax: 202.628.0391 • [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org)  
Edward Wytkind, President • Michael A. Ingraio, Secretary-Treasurer



Created in 1962, the TAA provides retraining, reemployment assistance and income support to workers who lost their jobs due to federal trade policies.

“The impact of globalization is not limited to the industrial sector, but somehow the TAA program has never been updated to reflect that fact,” Wytkind said.

Transportation unions will also work to ensure airline flight crews are covered by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), federal protections that continue to evade thousands of airline employees since the law was enacted 15 years ago.

“Congress clearly did not intend to exclude flight attendants and pilots when it created this important family protection law,” Wytkind said. “Airline workers should not have to negotiate for leave benefits the rest of the American workforce is guaranteed.”

Despite the fact that the federal government is currently enrolling thousands of maritime and longshore workers in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, redundant state background check programs continue to exist. The TWIC was created to be the universal credential and eliminate the need for multiple cards, multiple checks and multiple fees.

“This duplication is bureaucracy at its worst,” Wytkind said. “Ports aren’t going to be any more safe because workers are forced to hold multiple security credentials.”

The Bush Administration has ignored safety and security threats posed by allowing poorly regulated and virtually un-inspected Mexican trucks to traverse American highways. And this may soon be the case for bus service, since NAFTA includes a provision allowing unlimited bus and truck operations between the U.S. and Mexico. The Bush Administration has refused to halt the truck pilot program by arguing over the interpretation of the law Congress passed to stop it.

“Unfettered access to our highways by potentially unsafe Mexico-based truck and bus operators poses severe safety and security threats to Americans,” Wytkind said.

###

*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).*