



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Michael Buckley
202/628-9262
202/262-3854
MichaelB@ttd.org

Recess Appointments to Amtrak Board of Directors are "Triumph of Cronyism over Competence"

Washington, D.C. . . . *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), in response to President Bush using recess appointments to re-name Enrique Sosa and Floyd Hall to the Amtrak Board of Directors.*

"The President's reappointment of Sosa and Hall represents the triumph of cronyism over competence, and is a great disservice to Amtrak's 25 million passengers and 20,000 workers.

"Congress overwhelmingly supports a strong Amtrak. And many on Capitol Hill, including prominent Republicans, have questioned the legality of the Board's current composition and have called for higher qualification standards for its members. Obviously, the Administration failed to heed bipartisan congressional warnings that the current situation surrounding the Amtrak board mess is "pathetic." If the White House had been listening, it would have replaced Sosa and Hall with Board members who have both transportation experience and a commitment to improve, not dismantle, our national passenger railroad.

"Prior to joining the Amtrak Board, Sosa had never traveled on an Amtrak train. Hall's experience was not in running trains, but rather in running department stores and raising cash for political candidates. After taking their posts, both have abdicated their responsibilities by weakening – through outsourcing and privatization schemes – the very rail company they are charged with strengthening.

"Naming – and particularly re-naming – Sosa and Hall embody all that is wrong with this Administration's five year pattern of putting highly unqualified political supporters in charge of vital public services. Congress must step in and demand greater accountability from this Board and also higher standards for who can serve on it."

TTD represents 29 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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
Edward Wytkind, President • Michael A. Ingraio, Secretary-Treasurer

