



NEWS RELEASE

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WORKERS BEAR BRUNT OF PORT ID CARD SECURITY PROGRAM *Transportation Labor Urges TSA To Fix The TWIC Program*

WASHINGTON, DC-August 23, 2006— *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), following the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) new plan to implement the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) affecting 750,000 workers needing unescorted access to secure areas of ports and vessels including longshoremens, maritime employees, rail workers and truck drivers without requiring the purchase or installation of card readers:*

“The recent decision by TSA to postpone the installation and purchase of biometric card readers while still forcing workers to undergo extensive background checks and pay for a biometric ID card is extremely troubling. Our government says the TWIC program was designed to use biometric technology and collect biographical data to control access to our nation’s maritime facilities.

“It makes no sense to impose onerous requirements on workers now and force them to pay almost \$150 for a glorified flash pass that may never be used as intended. Without the ability to verify a worker’s identity through biometric data, there are limited safeguards to ensure that someone with terrorist intentions does not assume a false identity. Thus, our government is saying that it will burden workers with extensive background checks and new fees but it will take a pass on requiring and providing funding for installation of card readers. Why should workers bear the brunt of our government’s transportation security programs?

“If TSA is not ready to proceed with TWIC as Congress mandated, then the entire program should be halted. We urge TSA to work with transportation labor to ensure that the problems and concerns of workers surrounding privacy rights, background checks and due process in appeals are addressed before this program proceeds. And to be fair, the government – not individual workers – must absorb the costs of the program.”

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About TTD

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), a Washington, D.C.-based labor organization, represents several million transportation workers in the private and public sector. The 31 member unions of TTD work in aviation, bus, mass transit, rail, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. TTD works with Congress and the Executive Branch including the transportation related Federal Agencies to protect good jobs, increase wages, defend workers’ rights, increase transportation safety plus security and ensure adequate funding for our nation’s transportation infrastructure. Under the umbrella of the AFL-CIO, which represents more than 9 million workers in the United States, TTD handles policy and legislative issues related to transportation. Visit www.ttd.org for more information.

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