



NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Unions Focus on Priority Issues, Urge Congress to Complete Work on Important Bills

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Executive Committee of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, committed today to make priorities of rebuilding America’s failing transportation system and infrastructure, stopping outsourcing at the United States Postal Service, and protecting the income and retirement security of public transit workers.

Transportation labor leaders also committed to push for completion of key reauthorization bills for the Federal Aviation Administration, Amtrak, and railroad safety. TTD will continue to advocate its agenda for each of these bills, which was first outlined in March.

“The FAA is at a crossroads as our aviation system reaches capacity. Shoestring budgets and a neglected workforce at Amtrak will not restructure it for future success. And rail safety legislation is a decade past-due,” said Edward Wytkind, President of TTD. “Seeing Congress finish its work on these important transportation bills is at the top of transportation labor’s agenda.”

TTD adopted three new policy statements to outline its position on priority issues:

In order to rebuild America’s transportation system and infrastructure, TTD endorsed Rep. James Oberstar’s National Highway System Bridge Reconstruction Initiative, as well as Sen. Patty Murray’s amendment to the Transportation-HUD spending bill that provides states with additional funds for bridge repair. These bridge proposals are important to meeting America’s immediate needs, but should be considered down payments on what the American Society of Civil Engineers says is a \$180 billion price tag for needed infrastructure investment over the next 20 years. The same can be said for all other sectors of our transportation system and infrastructure – roads, mass transit, airports and air traffic control, Amtrak, freight rail and ports – which need tens of billions in new investment.

“As we witnessed in Minneapolis, lack of investment has pushed the transportation system to the brink of collapse, threatening the economy, the safety of Americans, and our way of life,” Wytkind said. “The Bush Administration is providing no leadership on this critical issue, but lawmakers are calling for action. It is time for our elected leaders to find the political will to make this the generation that rebuilt our aging infrastructure.”

The United States Postal Service is jumping on the outsourcing and privatizing bandwagon at the expense of good jobs, safety and security, and reliable delivery of basic services.

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According to a new USPS program, all new mail delivery locations will be considered for outsourcing to companies that often provide low wages, no benefits, and have no equivalent background check requirements. This program and other attempts to outsource core mail handling functions violate the spirit of the policy established by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, which reinforced collective bargaining obligations. In its effort to employ fewer union workers, the USPS is opening its doors to a far less accountable workforce.

“In this post-Anthrax era, it is counterintuitive that the USPS would entrust any portion of its service with unscreened subcontractors,” Wytkind said. “Mail can be sensitive cargo, and Americans expect first-class service for their bills, ballots, and prescription drugs, not to mention their identity protection.”

As Congress struggles to fund our nation’s mass transit systems, cutting employee pay and limiting pension programs should not be conditions for financial support. Legislation to fund Washington, D.C.’s mass transit system has been amended to cap overtime pay and exclude overtime pay from pension calculations. Management and workers agree that the real culprit of excessive overtime is inadequate staffing levels.

“Arbitrary limits on overtime pay do nothing to fix the problem, and they also run roughshod over collective bargaining agreements,” Wytkind said. “Congress should not micro-manage labor-management relations, but instead, allow employers to focus on inadequate staffing levels by hiring enough employees to meet scheduling and service requirements.”

For the full policy statements on each of these issues, please visit www.ttd.org.

In light of the upcoming retirement of TTD Secretary-Treasurer Mike Ingrao, TTD’s Executive Committee elected Patricia Friend to succeed him effective Nov. 1, 2007. Friend is the International President of the Association of Flight Attendants, CWA and has served as TTD’s Secretary-Treasurer previously.

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TTD represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.