



NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Labor Tells House Committee “We Need Mandatory Training Now”

WASHINGTON, DC-September 28, 2006- The lack of any comprehensive, mandatory security training for rail and transit workers five years after September 11, 2001 is “difficult to believe,” a transportation labor leader told a House Subcommittee on Homeland Security today. Despite multiple attacks on transit and rail systems around the world, “the federal government still has not stepped in to provide the necessary funding, oversight, and guidance to ensure that railroad and transit systems address their immediate security needs.”

“Hundreds of thousands of employees work on our nation’s transit and rail systems, and the fact that they have not been prepared to respond in the event of a terrorist threat or attack is unconscionable,” said Ed Wytkind, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO. “It is common sense that training workers is a highly effective way to secure and safeguard our transit and rail networks.”

Wytkind focused his testimony on the need for mandatory training. “The problem is that if rail and transit systems are not required to provide security training, it will not be universally implemented by systems across the country.”

Rail and transit workers remain poorly trained. “A recent survey of transit workers conducted by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) found that even five years after 9-11, approximately 60 percent of ATU members working for U.S. transit systems remain untrained,” Wytkind pointed out. Furthermore, rail workers have not been given access to the resources they need to be in a better position to recognize irregularities or discover suspicious activities. “The training materials are not tailored to any specific job responsibilities and are not designed to impart any specific skills—they simply tell workers to be vigilant.”

Wytkind noted that proposals to require security training for rail and transit workers are being considered in negotiations on the pending port security bill. He urged these provisions be included in the final bill sent to the President. “Training is too important to ignore or delay another day and Congress has the opportunity to address this problem. Congress must act now.”

For a copy of Ed Wytkind’s testimony, go to www.ttd.org.

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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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