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House Rejects Calls to Break-Up, Bankrupt Amtrak

Transportation Labor Says House Support for Amtrak Recognizes Need for Federal Investment

Washington, D.C. . . . *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), in response to votes in the U.S. House of Representatives providing \$1.2 billion in funding for a national Amtrak system for Fiscal Year 2006.*

"Last night's votes in the U.S. House of Representatives were a strong rejection of efforts by some in Washington to break-up and bankrupt Amtrak, flawed policy moves which would strand 25 million passengers and send 20,000 more workers to already-long unemployment lines.

"America's transportation workers owe a debt of gratitude to Representatives Steven LaTourette, (R-OH), James Oberstar (D-MN), and Corrine Brown (D-FL) for their leadership on Amtrak. They and their colleagues recognized a fundamental truth -- all forms of transportation, including Amtrak, require federal investment. It is patently unfair to hold our national rail system to a different standard than we have for aviation, maritime, highways, and transit.

"The \$1.2 billion provided to Amtrak -- and the rejection of an effort to eliminate 18 routes -- are steps in the right direction, but forcing Amtrak to careen from one financial crisis to another is no way to run a railroad. Even with this amount, Amtrak would still lack the funding to fully return the railroad to a state of good repair.

"We hope these votes mark the beginning of the end of misguided calls to shut down Amtrak, and instead sets our government down a path toward a first-class national rail system. As this bill moves through Congress, we will redouble our efforts to ensure that the Senate builds upon this funding level."

TTD represents 35 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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