



NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Labor: Amtrak Board Must Go

Board Ignoring Public Interest in Advancing Reckless Privatization and Break-up of Amtrak

Washington, D.C. . . . *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), in response to today's bipartisan criticism by House and Senate lawmakers of the Amtrak Board of Directors in the wake of its abrupt firing of the railroad's CEO.*

"Congress is doing the right thing to critically question a Board of Directors at Amtrak that is on a reckless course to destroy America's national passenger rail carrier.

"In April of this year we called for the immediate resignation of the Amtrak Board members, saying they had abandoned their fiduciary responsibilities as stewards of this company. Today we renew that call and urge Congress to step in before the current Board destroys Amtrak as we know it and saddles the states and passengers with an unprecedented transportation crisis.

"Today lawmakers in both parties and both chambers questioned whether the Board is legally constituted. They even raised doubts about the Board's legal authority to take some of the secretive actions it is pursuing without congressional approval. This should send a clear signal to Congress that the current Board members are no longer fit to serve Amtrak or the nation's travelers.

"The Board's members – all appointed by the Bush administration – share two things in common. The first is an astonishing lack of experience in, of all things, running a passenger railroad. Secondly, they are united by a blind devotion to breaking-up and privatizing Amtrak, a move that has been rejected by Congress and has failed wherever it's been tried around the globe. Instead of advocating for the future of Amtrak, the Board appears to act as a conduit to advance the interests of those who would benefit from breaking up Amtrak and selling it off in pieces.

"Perhaps worst of all was today's attempts by the Amtrak Chairman of the Board to blame Amtrak employees for the Board's own incompetence and mismanagement. Congress should dismiss this senseless demonizing of Amtrak workers and their unions and instead reign in this out-of-control Board."

TTD represents 29 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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