



A bold voice for transportation workers

November 4, 2015

Oppose Newhouse Amendment #120

Dear Representative:

As the House continues to consider H.R. 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act (STRRA), the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) strongly urges you to oppose Representative Newhouse's amendment (#120) on port metrics. When the underlying bill was marked up in the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, we were supportive of the carefully crafted bipartisan package. However, we are extremely concerned that the Newhouse amendment will upset this critical balance by injecting extraneous, anti-labor issues into this bill. The STRRA should be an opportunity to refocus on our massive transportation investment needs, not an attempt to undermine the rights of front-line workers. We therefore ask you to join Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio and vote down this provision.

The port productivity metrics proposed by the Newhouse amendment uses the cloak of benign statistical collection to help trigger more frequent federal intervention in the collective bargaining of U.S. port workers. The amendment would require the Department of Transportation (DOT) to create new, standardized metrics on the productivity of ports, including the activities of workers. During contract negotiations, these metrics would be crudely and arbitrarily used as evidence of workplace slow-downs that would trigger federal injunctions under current law, or expanded injunctions and union decertification procedures being proposed in separate bills. In short, this amendment is an overreach that injects the government's data collection operation into labor/management collective bargaining issues.

The amendment also ignores the innumerable variables that affect port productivity that have nothing to do with unions or collective bargaining, including the rapid increase in larger ships, outmoded landside infrastructure, the state of the economy, the availability of chassis, and other systemic problems plaguing ports. Under the port metric mandates in Newhouse #120, the collective bargaining process would be blamed for all problems related to productivity absent any justification or consideration of the complicated nature of port logistics networks.

We are joined in our opposition to this amendment by the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) and the National Association of Waterfront Employers (NAWE).

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



Our nation is in significant need of reliable and increased investment in our surface transportation system. There is absolutely no reason that we should undermine this important bill by introducing unrelated anti-worker amendments. We therefore urge you to vote no on Newhouse Amendment #120.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Edward Wytkind
President