



A bold voice for transportation workers

December 4, 2018

Support Good Amtrak Jobs in California

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to sign on to Rep. Mark Takano's letter to Amtrak President and CEO Richard Anderson in opposition to Amtrak's announced intention to shut down its Riverside, CA call center location. This decision, set to take effect next month, would result in the loss of 500 good-paying union jobs in California and further undermine Amtrak's dedicated workforce.

While Amtrak claims this decision is due to a decrease in call volume at its Riverside location, we know that a contractor located in Port St. Lucie, Florida —Teleperformance Inc.—is slated to capture most of this work. In fact, Amtrak has asked the contractor to hire 150 additional individuals in anticipation of the closure in California and has even sent current Riverside employees to Florida to train replacements. We estimate that Teleperformance workers will make about half of what employees in Riverside currently earn and will not receive health or retirement benefits. Simply put, Amtrak is now pursuing a low-road labor model and seeking to avoid collective bargaining arrangements that cover the call center workforce.

Amtrak is fond of touting the value it places on its frontline workers and talks about the need to improve the so-called customer experience. Yet the company now seems more than willing to outsource customer-facing jobs to an outside operation and to abandon 500 dedicated workers who provide quality service every day. We find this move unacceptable, especially at a time when policy makers at all levels are seeking to raise wages and support jobs that can support families. It is also significant that the union representing these workers made major concessions as recently as August, and agreed to part-time arrangements to keep work in Riverside—an effort that now seems to have been forgotten by Amtrak.

Finally, it must be remembered that California spends almost \$90 million every year to support Amtrak service via the state-supported route program and even more to facilitate passenger rail throughout the state. Amtrak has a responsibility to support this passenger rail market and to act in a more responsible manner when it comes to their workers. While one might expect such conduct from a Wall Street firm, Amtrak, as a government corporation with a history of support from its workers, can and must do better.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer



We urge you to sign on to this letter and send a strong message to Amtrak that outsourcing jobs from California cannot stand and is not the way to sustain and grow our national passenger rail network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry I. Willis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry I. Willis
President

December XX, 2018

Mr. Richard H. Anderson
President & CEO
Amtrak
One Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We are writing to express our deep concern with and opposition to Amtrak's recent decision to close its reservations facility in Riverside, CA, and eliminate the positions of almost 500 employees in our state.

We understand that Amtrak plans to outsource this work to a call center in Port St. Lucie, FL run by the international outsourcing firm, Teleperformance Inc. We have learned that Amtrak has asked the contractor to hire 150 individuals. This move flies in the face of your November 14th announcement to employees that cited an alleged reduction in calls as a principle reason for your decision to outsource this work. But if that were true, Amtrak would not require the contractor to hire additional workers.

Workers employed at Teleperformance, Inc. reportedly earn an average of \$12 per hour without healthcare or benefits. This is significantly less than Amtrak employees currently earn through their negotiated contract rates of approximately \$19 - \$21 per hour with healthcare and Railroad Retirement benefits. We have also heard alarming reports of Amtrak engaging in the disrespectful practice of requiring employees to train their replacements at the outsourcer that will be taking over their work. This would represent a new low for Amtrak management.

Amtrak is unlike any other American corporation in that it is majority owned by the federal government and receives billions of American tax dollars to subsidize their service. And though we agree with Congress' mandate that Amtrak should and must endeavor to deliver services more efficiently, that does not give Amtrak license to engage in union-busting and union-avoidance maneuvers to lower costs on the backs of working men and women.

California remains one of the largest contributors to Amtrak. In FY2017, CA contributed nearly \$88 million to Amtrak for its three state-supported service routes. According to Amtrak, California's corridors "are among the busiest in the system," including nine of the nation's top twenty busiest stations on state-supported lines. Californians continue to express interest and support for Amtrak through increased ridership and both their federal and state tax dollars, so it comes as surprise to us that Amtrak would consider removing these jobs from our state.

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As members of California's delegation to Congress, we would be hard-pressed to view this decision as anything but hostile to the interests of our state and would communicate our concerns directly to our colleagues in California's state and local governments, as well as regional transit agencies.

We respectfully request that you reverse your decision immediately, and work with your employees' union representatives to find an agreement that keeps this facility open and Californians employed.

Sincerely,

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

[Name]
Member of Congress