



MISGUIDED WHITE HOUSE AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTION COULD SHUT DOWN AMTRAK

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a transportation appropriations bill that followed the lead of the White House and provided Amtrak just \$900 million -- half the money the railroad's president says is needed to avert a shut-down of the passenger service. While the Senate committee-passed bill is heading in the right direction with an appropriation of \$1.35 billion, unless more funding can be provided, Amtrak could face financial collapse, thereby stranding millions of passengers and eliminating more than 20,000 jobs.

The failure of the House leadership to even allow a vote on additional funding is yet another example of the over 30 years of neglect that has hobbled Amtrak and forced its workers to make sacrifice after sacrifice just to keep the trains running. The \$1.8 billion appropriation would stave off more service and job cuts and the possible elimination of many long-distance trains that service key communities outside the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak's near-perennial brushes with death are the product of years of anemic funding and a lingering, ideological fallacy that a passenger railroad can turn a profit. Passenger rail, just like other modes of transportation, must be treated like a vital public service, and we must make long-term investments in the system and its workers.

Amtrak workers, who are critical to its success, have also paid the price for these failed policies. Their wages are more than 20 percent below those in freight and commuter rail, new contracts are years overdue, and workers are subjected to a climate of economic uncertainty and scapegoating by headline-seeking politicians. It is grossly unfair to continue to run America's passenger rail system on the backs of Amtrak's workers and it is long past time to put an end to the myth that Amtrak workers make too much and sacrifice too little.

Just as Congress must act swiftly in reversing this woefully inadequate funding level for Amtrak, so too must it reject those who seek to capitalize on Amtrak's peril by advancing flawed, ideological policy schemes. Amtrak needs more money. What it doesn't need is the Bush Administration's drive to slash service, pass costs to already financially-strapped states, and launch risky privatization. In addition, the Bush Administration must abandon efforts to stack the Amtrak Board of Directors with individuals who don't support Amtrak's core mission of providing a public service and instead want to use their position to test-out privatization theories at the expense of workers and passengers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT TTD AFFILIATED UNIONS WILL:

- Urge Congress to support Amtrak's passengers and workers by fully funding the passenger railroad's FY 2004 budget request of \$1.8 billion;
- Reject the Bush Administration's reauthorization plan for Amtrak, which would be the death knell for national passenger rail in this country;

- ❑ Support a multi-year reauthorization plan that provides a real commitment to Amtrak and ensures that appropriate labor protections and laws continue to apply;
- ❑ Condemn, in the strongest possible terms, any move by public or private sector officials to scapegoat Amtrak workers or to reform Amtrak in a way that does not positively recognize and support its over 20,000 employees;
- ❑ Oppose Amtrak Board of Director candidates that support schemes to privatize or break-up the carrier at the expense of workers, passengers and communities that depend on passenger rail service.

Resolution No. F03-13
Adopted September 17, 2003