

BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

1370 Ontario Street
Standard Building, Mezzanine
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1702

DENNIS R. PIERCE
National President



Phone: 216.241.2630
Fax: 216.241.6516
www.ble-t.org

June 20, 2011

Dear Representative,

On behalf of more than 55,000 active and retired members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, a Division of the 1.4 million member International Brotherhood of Teamsters, I am writing to express my strenuous opposition to the proposal for passenger rail put forth by Representative Mica on June 15, 2011.

Contrary to Representative Mica's assertions, the proposal does not have the support of labor, and would be an unmitigated disaster for both railroad workers and the traveling public. It would jeopardize the jobs of 20,000 working men and women currently employed by Amtrak, undermine the Railroad Retirement system that provides pensions for over 525,000 adult annuitants, and imperil rail passenger service nationwide.

The claim that this proposal provides adequate labor protection is absolutely false. Basic rights of and protections for Amtrak workers would be eliminated or significantly curtailed upon privatization of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Moreover, the bill states that private entities providing rail service are considered rail carriers "only for purposes of title 49, United States Code." Thus, these pseudo-carriers would be exempt from important Title 45 requirements, including the Railway Labor Act and the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts.

In addition, the traveling public would suffer serious reductions in service. Representative Mica seeks to auction off Amtrak's profitable Northeast Corridor, which would devastate passenger rail throughout the country. The record ridership on the Corridor enables Amtrak to devote its operating subsidies to support long distance lines in other parts of the country, which often are the only means of public transportation for isolated communities. If private entities are permitted to skim the cream from the Northeast Corridor, as proposed by Representative Mica, Amtrak will be forced to subsidize operations on the less attractive Corridor "leftovers," at the expense of these long distance lines, which will shrivel up and disappear.

Instead of this job killing, ridership devastating plan, we ought to be looking at ways to help Amtrak achieve the goal of high-speed rail; not looking for ways to dismantle it. Please stand up for workers, communities and riders and oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

National President

Representative

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June 20, 2011

bc: E. L. Pruitt, First Vice President
W. C. Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer
J. P. Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative
A. D. Cook, III, Director of Benefits
T. A. Pontolillo, Assistant to the President and Director of Research
G. E. Ross, Director of Communications and Coordinator of Legal Affairs
File: Amtrak Privatization 2011

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