

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Congress Must Reject Job-Killing Cuts to Mass Transit, Amtrak and High Speed Rail

WASHINGTON, DC – *Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), offers the following statement in response to Republican Study Committee (RSC) proposals to slash or zero out funding for mass transit, Amtrak and high speed rail:*

“These proposed cuts would deal a major blow to millions of Americans who want more transportation choices, not fewer. Hundreds of thousands of jobs would be eliminated by the proposed cuts to transportation programs alone – at a time when nationwide unemployment struggles to stay below 10 percent. And the proposed massive cuts to state aid will make it virtually impossible for states to fund their share of transportation programs and other vital services.

“It may be politically popular for politicians to say they want to rein in federal spending. But Americans overwhelmingly support more investment in transportation, according to an economic analysis of infrastructure investment written by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Council of Economic Advisers. Elected officials on both sides of the aisle have always fought to ensure America remains a world leader in passenger and freight transportation.

“The public grows weary of transit service cuts, delayed expansion and modernization of airports, air traffic control and rail systems, deteriorated and traffic-choked highways and bridges, and underinvestment in port and maritime systems that are crucial to an aggressive export agenda. And with the proposed repeal of prevailing wage requirements on federally funded construction projects, the wages of transportation construction workers will be eroded.

“It is ironic that this proposal to slash vital transportation investments was unveiled on the very day that we learned that Americans spend as many as 70 hours – or nearly 3 solid days – a year stuck in traffic. The Texas Transportation Institute’s national study also revealed that congestion wastes 3.9 billion gallons of fuel and costs \$115 billion nationwide on an annual basis. If passed, the Republican Study Committee’s proposals will add to the woes of commuters and travelers and send literally thousands of workers to the unemployment lines.

“It is our sincere hope that elected officials on both sides of the aisle will dismiss these reckless proposals and focus the time and energy of Congress on ways to fix and modernize our transportation system and put Americans to work in good jobs.

“You can’t boost the economy and create jobs by bankrupting the programs that support our transportation system and infrastructure. And politicians will not solve federal and state budget challenges by destroying thousands of private and public sector jobs.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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