

# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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June 21, 2011

The Honorable John Mica, Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica and Ranking Member Rahall:

I write you on behalf of the 1.4 million members of the Teamsters Union, and especially those who work on our nation's railroads, to voice our strong opposition to the Intercity Passenger Rail in America Act. This proposed legislation, put forth by Chairman Mica, is nothing other than a veiled attempt to destroy Amtrak as we know it and put the interests of Wall Street ahead of those living on Main Street.

Our members, represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, will be especially aggrieved by this bill. Contrary to proclamations that workers will be protected under its provisions, the bill provides no real labor protections for Amtrak workers. Those would be eliminated or significantly curtailed once Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) is sold off to a private entity. In fact, language in the bill provides that private entities providing rail service are considered rail carriers "only for the purpose of Title 49, United States Code." That means private providers of passenger rail service would not be covered by the Railroad Retirement Act or the Railway Labor Act (RLA).

The end result is that with no RLA coverage, these rail workers would lose the right to bargain collectively or be represented by a union under the RLA. This ill-conceived legislation would also undermine the Railroad Retirement System, putting in jeopardy the pensions provided to over 525,000 annuitants. Benefits could be slashed even if payroll taxes are increased to make up part of the shortfall.

Worse yet is what this proposal would do to passenger rail service in America. Auctioning off Amtrak's profitable NEC would destroy passenger rail service throughout the country. The NEC profit allows Amtrak to subsidize long distance lines in other parts of the U.S. where rail service can be the only means of public transportation. The NEC revenues are also used by Amtrak to finance and maintain its rolling stock, in addition to train stations, repair shops and other facilities.

Private interests have no incentive to operate for the public benefit. Their only motivation is profit, which means that services could be cut while fares and access fees could be increased. This bill rewards Wall Street investors and does nothing to advance what's really needed in this country – a strong commitment from Congress for a robust high speed rail network throughout the U.S. This assault on Amtrak should be stopped dead in its tracks!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

James P. Hoffa  
General President