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TCU-IAM Condemns Congressional Attack on Rail Workers' Rights

Washington, D.C., January 26, 2012 – Robert Scardelletti, National President of the Transportation Communications Union/IAM (TCU/IAM) today issued the following statement criticizing a Congressional proposal that only provides long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding at the expense of railroad workers' collective bargaining rights:

“In developing this greatly flawed proposal there was no consultation with rail labor or management, the two groups who worked with Congress to write the Railway Labor Act more than 75 years ago.

The TCU/IAM cannot support any legislation that dilutes the authority of the National Mediation Board or sacrifices the rights of railroad workers.

It makes no sense to tie changes to the Railway Labor Act to an aviation safety bill.”

Included in the FAA Reauthorization bill are changes to the Railway Labor Act, the federal labor law covering airline and railroad workers, which would require the support of at least 50 percent of an employee group before a union representation election could be held. Currently, there is no statutory requirement, but National Mediation Board policy sets a 35 percent threshold. Other private sector workers who fall under the National Labor Relations Act need only 30 percent to trigger an election.

The proposal also seeks to encumber the National Mediation Board with onerous oversight by the Comptroller General which could seriously impede the Board's abilities under its mediation functions and in its role in railroad arbitrations.

While the proposal requires the NMB to hold public hearings before changing its rules, this very proposal imposes new standards on the NMB without the benefit of any such public hearing.

The Transportation Communications Union/IAM represents approximately 46,000 members in the U.S., with most employed in the railroad industry. In July 2005, TCU affiliated with the IAM with full merger taking place in January 2012. More information about the TCU/IAM is available at www.tcunion.org.