



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

Major Steps Forward

From the House Appropriations Debate . . .

. . . on the Richardson amendment (subsequently voted down) to cut Amtrak's FY '86 appropriation from \$603.5 million to \$581.4 million.

Rep. WILLIAM LEHMAN (D-FL, chairman, Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation): Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment offered by [Mr. Richardson]. . . Last year Amtrak was at \$684 million. We brought the bill to the floor of the House at \$616 million. On the floor of the House today we reduced it to \$603.5 million. That to me is what I call fiscal responsibility on Amtrak.

I do not want to be a friend of Amtrak and cut it down to the bone where it cannot operate. I want Amtrak to survive. It has already taken its fair share of cuts. There is already an 11.8% reduction to Amtrak. I do not think it is responsible to make any further reductions if we really want to keep a viable national passenger railroad. . . .

Rep. VIC FAZIO (D-CA, member, Appropriations Comm.): I want to rise in strong support of the position of the subcommittee chairman. . . . The Committee on the Budget has made an overall figure clear for transit spending, but it does not have the responsibility, and I say this as a member of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations, to determine specific levels as it relates to various kinds of transportation funding. That is the jurisdiction of this committee and the subcommittee, particularly in light of the amendment that was offered and agreed to at the very beginning, offered by the chairman. It has met its responsibilities to the Committee on the Budget. [Mr. Lehman] and his subcommittee have done what we have asked them to do in the budget process. . . .

Rep. SILVIO O. CONTE (R-MA, ranking Republican, Appropriations Comm.): Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this amendment to make a further cut in the appropriations for Amtrak. . . . I might add that I supported [today's \$12.5 million] reduction very reluctantly, and did so only because it was part of an overall, billion dollar reduction to bring this bill in line with our need to reduce the Federal deficit.

In my view, any further reduction in Amtrak spending would be extremely unwise. [He then referred to a letter from Amtrak Pres. Claytor.] . . . Mr. Chairman, this would be exactly the wrong time to make this kind of a drastic reduction in Amtrak funding. All indications are that service is improving. . . . Unlike most other transpor-

(continued on page 3)

Two Strong Pro-Amtrak House Votes: 245-173 and 290-128

The full House finally got a chance to vote on Amtrak in September, and delivered two solid bipartisan votes of confidence in U.S. intercity rail passenger service.

On Sep. 11, the House rejected 273-145 an amendment to HR 3244, the DOT appropriations bill, which would have cut Amtrak funding 15% below the 1985 level of \$684 million. On Sep. 19, the House voted 290-128 in favor of HR 2266, the Amtrak authorization bill. Both bills would fund Amtrak at \$603.5 million in FY '86—11.8% below the FY '85 level.

Appropriation: HR 3244, as reported from committee, included \$616 million for Amtrak. Rep. William Lehman (D-FL), the subcommittee chairman, then offered—and the House accepted—a package of 12 amendments making a total of \$1 billion worth of cuts in various transportation programs, including the reduction of Amtrak funding from \$616 million to \$603.5 million. Lehman told the House that “none of these reductions is desirable, but I think that they are all necessary given the large budget deficits this country faces and the expressed desire of this body for greater efforts to get our budget under control.”

The reluctance Lehman expressed applied at least as much to Amtrak as to other programs. He commented in a hearing last March that—except for health programs—he couldn't think of a more important federal responsibility than passenger train service. As the other quotations here suggest, the subcommittee consists almost exclusively of strong Amtrak supporters, but felt that a small further Amtrak cut would help head off larger cuts expected to be proposed by others.

There was another political imperative: keeping the entire bill within the overall allocation the subcommittee received from the full appropriations committee, whose figures were in turn based on the budget resolution. Thus every dollar increase in Amtrak funding above the resolution's 15% cut level was a dollar taken from another transportation program, a process that—if overdone—might have produced massive resistance from legislators defending other transportation interests.

The subcommittee's calculations appeared to be on target. When a 15% cut amendment was proposed, subcommittee members repeatedly pointed out that Amtrak had already been cut twice—in committee, from \$684 million to \$616 million; on the floor that day, to \$603.5 million—and that the overall bill met the subcommittee's budget act responsibilities.

(continued on page 3)

TEXAS

1. Chapman (D)	✓	•
2. Wilson (D)	•	•
3. Bartlett (R)		
4. Hall (D)	•	•
5. Bryant (D)	•	•
6. Barton (R)		
7. Archer (R)		
8. Fields (R)		
9. Brooks (D)	•	•
10. Pickle (D)	•	•
11. Leath (D)		
12. Wright (D)	•	•
13. Boultner (R)		
14. Sweeney (R)		
15. de la Garza (D)	•	•
16. Coleman (D)		

17. Stenholm (D)		
18. Leland (D)	•	•
19. Conabest (R)		
20. Gonzalez (D)	•	•
21. Loeffler (R)		
22. DeLay (R)		
23. Bustamante (D)	•	•
24. Frost (D)	•	•
25. Andrews (D)	•	•
26. Arney (R)		
27. Ortiz (D)	•	•

UTAH

1. Hansen (R)		
2. Monson (R)		
3. Nielson (R)		

VERMONT

AL Jeffords (R)	•	•
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VIRGINIA

1. Bateman (R)		•
2. Whitehurst (R)		
3. Billey (R)		•
4. Sizasky (D)	•	•
5. Daniel (D)	•	•
6. Olin (D)	•	•
7. Slaughter (R)	•	•
8. Parris (R)	•	•
9. Bouchar (D)	•	•
10. Wolf (R)	•	•

WASHINGTON

1. Miller (R)		
2. Swift (D)	•	•
3. Bonker (D)	•	•
4. Morrison (R)		
5. Foley (D)	•	•
6. Bicks (D)	•	•
7. Lowry (D)	•	•
8. Chandler (R)		

WEST VIRGINIA

1. Mollohan (D)	•	•
2. Staggers (D)	•	•
3. Wise (D)	•	•
4. Rahall (D)	•	•

WISCONSIN

1. Aspin (D)	•	•
2. Kastemeier (D)	•	•
3. Gunderson (R)		
4. Kletzka (D)	•	•
5. Moody (D)	•	•
6. Petri (R)	•	•
7. Obay (D)	•	•
8. Roth (R)	•	•
9. Sensenbrenner (R)		

WYOMING

AL Cheney (R)		
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Pro-Amtrak Votes (continued from page 1)

Perhaps the biggest surprise was the fact that Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM), previously known as a strong Amtrak supporter, was the author of the 15% cut amendment. In his remarks to the House, he insisted that "this is not an anti-Amtrak amendment. . . . I am a strong supporter of Amtrak, but I think it is important that we be fiscally responsible and we simply follow what the House-Senate budget compromise has enacted."

His office later told NARP that Richardson was concerned about heading off the 20% cut they said others were considering

LATE FLASH! On Oct. 3, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a DOT appropriations bill with \$616 million for Amtrak, affirming its subcommittee's Sep. 26 action.

offering. But only 2 members joined him to speak in support of his amendment—Reps. Dan Coats (R-IN) and Robert S. Walker (R-PA)—while 4 Republicans and 3 Democrats spoke against the amendment (see quotations). The 245-173 defeat of the amendment found Democrats voting 195-48 against the amendment, while 125 Republicans voted for it and 50 voted against. The bill itself passed the House 307-102 on Sep. 12.

Authorization: The focus then shifted to the Amtrak reauthorization, HR 2266. (Normally, money is both authorized and appropriated, but Amtrak did not have authorizations for FY '84-5 and may wind up without a FY '86 authorization as well, either because there is no Senate companion measure or because the House and Senate won't resolve their differences.) The first step was approval of H.Res. 263, the rule providing for the consideration of the bill. The debate on the rule was dominated by two outspoken Amtrak opponents, Delbert L. Latta (R-OH) and Walker, but the rule was approved 236-159.

Floor debate was set for Sep. 17 and consisted of supportive statements from James J. Florio (D-NJ) and Norman F. Lent, the chairman and ranking Republican, respectively, on the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism, and from Parren J. Mitchell (D-MD). For the printed record, Bill Frenzel (R-MN) submitted a statement saying "this bill is too costly" and criticizing the bill's requirement "that Amtrak maintain service levels on its least used and most costly routes."

On Sep. 19, the House passed the bill by a healthy 290-128 margin after accepting some amendments, including one offered by Richardson to reduce the authorized funding from \$616 million to the \$603.5 million level the House had approved a week earlier in the appropriations bill.

Rep. Walker spoke against Amtrak again, and pro-Amtrak statements were submitted for the printed record by Reps. James M. Jeffords (R-VT), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Conte, and Richardson. A statement from Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-IL), chairwoman of the Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation, strongly urged passage of the bill but also expressed concern about some actions of Amtrak management. She said the General Accounting Office is reviewing Amtrak procurement and property control practices in response to a joint request from herself and her subcommittee's ranking Republican, Rep. Alfred A. McCandless (CA). Also, "upon completion of my oversight, the Government Operations Committee will report to Congress its findings and recommendations," which she hoped would be reflected in the next authorization bill.

Although HR 2266 may never get any further, one of its provisions will be of special interest to NARP members: the establishment of a "National Railroad Passenger Corporation Financial Status Commission" to study "the ability of [Amtrak] to continue to improve, or to accelerate the improvement of, its financial performance; the short-term and long-term capital needs of Amtrak; and alternative funding mechanisms for Amtrak."

The Commission membership [with the appointing authorities in brackets] would be: two members of NARP—one from the Northeast Corridor (NEC—i.e., the states of MA/RI/CT/NY/NJ/PA/DE/MD and DC), one not [NARP's President]; and one representative each from the Department of Transportation [its Secretary], the Office of Management and Budget [its Director], the Senate [President pro tempore of the Senate], House of Representatives [Speaker of the House], the passenger bus industry [President of the U.S.], Amtrak [its president], the freight railroads [Association of American Railroads], rail labor [Railway Labor Executives' Association], and the private sector—someone with no financial interest in Amtrak or any competing mode [President of the U.S.]. There would also be 2 state legislators [National Conference of State Legislators]; 2 state transportation officials [Executive Director of the National Conference of State Railway Officials]; and two commuter authorities [American Public Transit Association]. As with the NARP members, these last three pairs of representatives would each consist of one from inside and one from outside the NEC. ■

Appropriations Debate (continued from page 1)

tation programs, Amtrak is an ongoing business in a very competitive service industry. **Further reducing Amtrak funding, and forcing service cuts, is exactly the way to prevent Amtrak from continuing its effort to gradually reduce its need for Federal appropriations.**

Perhaps the strongest recommendation for Amtrak, other than the hundreds of letters from Amtrak riders who support the continuation of Amtrak service, lies in the fact that **the Department of Transportation's original budget submitted to OMB called for \$765 million—\$81 million more than last year.**

Although Amtrak was knocked out of the budget by my friend, the now-missed Young Slasher, Dave Stockman, **it is clear from the original submission that the transportation department experts want to see Amtrak funded at the highest possible level. . . .**

It would be a transportation policy disaster, and a grave fiscal error, to cut Amtrak off just as it seems to be coming into its own. . . .

Rep. LAWRENCE COUGHLIN (R-PA, ranking Republican, Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation): I rise in opposition to the amendment. . . . We have cut the funding for Amtrak, not once but twice. . . . In the Transportation Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee we spent untold hours trying to review all the transportation programs and decide which priorities should be which. We have looked at this, we have looked at what the Budget Committee wanted, and we have looked at the bottom line. We have met the bottom line. We have a bill that meets the Budget Committee's recommendation; it is much less than last year, much below the freeze level. . . . So I think what has been done here by the Appropriations Committee and by [its] Transportation Subcommittee is entirely in order. We are at the budget level. We have reduced Amtrak. If we are forced to

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Appropriations Debate (continued from page 3)

reduce it more, it is not going to be able to function. Amtrak is important, not just to provide passenger service for this country, as is provided in every other nation, but also for national defense.

Rep. MARTIN OLAV SABO (D-MN, 2nd ranking Democrat, Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation): Mr. Chairman, I would just like to commend [Mr. Coughlin] for his statement and join him and the chairman of the subcommittee, along with the ranking minority member of the full committee, in opposition to this amendment.

It is clear that we have substantially reduced the spending in this bill. It is clear that we have also substantially reduced Amtrak funding from last year. I think it is also clear that Amtrak has been doing a better job year by year in managing its system and maintaining a viable rail passenger service in this country. To cut deeper, I think, would do violence to that system, and I hope that this body will reject the proposed amendment. . . .

Rep. STAN PARRIS (R-VA): Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the pending amendment which seeks further cuts in the Federal subsidy for Amtrak. . . . An additional cut . . . , as proposed by [Mr. Richardson], would mean a certain and premature death to the Nation's passenger railroad system. . . .

Amtrak has done a commendable job thus far in cutting costs both in the areas of labor and general operations. In fact, negotiations are currently underway between Amtrak and labor unions to further reduce labor costs. . . . In light of the substantial Federal investment in Amtrak already, it would be, in my judgment, unwise for the Congress to rush into a plan which would have the effect of killing Amtrak merely for short-term gain. . . .

Rep. NORMAN F. LENT (R-NY, ranking Republican, Energy & Commerce Subcomm. on Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism, which authorizes Amtrak funding): If the Amtrak were to be zeroed out as a result of this, I believe, unwise and injudicious cut a much greater burden would be placed on La Guardia Airport, Newark Airport, and [Washington's] National Airport. Given the number of landings and takeoffs at National Airport, I do not think that airport could reasonably handle the additional burden. . . .

Rep. PARRIS (R-VA): I take . . . a back seat to nobody in terms of his voting record in support of fiscal responsibility; but I do not think you can approach this or any other issue that comes before us in the exercise of these sometimes awesome responsibilities solely from a fiscal point of view. Money is important. Taxes are too high. We would like to reduce Government costs, but that is not the only consideration. The quality of life of the passenger railroad system of this Nation is important to this Nation. I think we have to keep that in mind and reject this amendment. ■

From the House Authorization "Debate" . . . of Sep. 17 (Congressional Record, pp. H7510-2) when no one present spoke against Amtrak.

Rep. JAMES J. FLORIO (D-NJ, chairman, Energy & Commerce Subcomm. on Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism): Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of HR 2266, legislation that would reauthorize Amtrak, our nation's passenger railroad.

This is an important piece of legislation for it allows Amtrak to maintain its existing level of service while encouraging the railroad to continue to improve its efficiency.

The administration initially proposed to eliminate all Federal funding for Amtrak. The practical effect of this proposal would be the elimination of all rail passenger service in the United States on October 1. . . . Fortunately, the administration recognized the need to continue rail passenger service in the agreement it reached with the Senate on the budget. . . .

It is important to understand why we need Amtrak. 20 million passengers ride the railroad.

In the Northeast, for instance, the loss of Amtrak will result in unmitigated disaster in the region. . . . The highways and airports of the Northeast are already packed, and 17,500 additional passengers a day would make a bad situation impossible to bear. [In FY '84, Amtrak carried a daily average of 17,500 passengers between major cities on the NY-Washington line and 29,480

throughout the NEC; during the first 11 months of FY '85, NEC ridership in air-competitive markets was at least 10% above FY '84 levels. Ed.]

Additionally, the commuter authorities of the Northeast would have to assume tremendous costs to cover maintenance previously shared with Amtrak. . . .

Outside the Northeast, about half of all Amtrak passengers earn a family income of less than \$20,000 annually and more than one-third of all non-Northeast passengers are over 55 years of age. Without Amtrak, these citizens would be forced to take either more costly, more frightening or less comfortable modes of transportation. Moreover, Amtrak is often the only mode of transportation that can operate during huge snowstorms, saving many communities, particularly in the West, from being isolated. . . .

Amtrak is a critical part of our national transportation system. If Amtrak were eliminated, the disastrous effects would be felt throughout the United States. This is a good bill for it allows Amtrak to provide its important service yet it also recognizes the need to reduce the deficit by reducing Amtrak's authorization.

Rep. LENT (R-NY): Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of HR 2266 . . . and commend [Mr. Florio]. . . .

This year, when the Federal deficit is of such major importance and concern, Congress has been carefully scrutinizing all federally funded programs, looking for ways to improve their efficiency, reduce their expenditures and, thereby, save the taxpayers' money. For this reason, Amtrak must shoulder its fair share in our effort to reduce the deficit. . . .

HR 2266 includes some of the suggestions which were made [in committee hearings] for increasing Amtrak's revenues. . . . Section 4 . . . allows Amtrak to compete for preferred contract carrier status in the Federal Government's discount program for Federal employees traveling on official business. Amtrak's inclusion in this program should result in additional revenues for Amtrak and considerable savings to the Government. . . .

Rep. PARRIS (D-MD): I am in strong support of this legislation. I would not have supported the cuts to the extent that they are made, but nevertheless we are preserving a very effective system.

I have two interesting comments from constituents. . . . One says "Government officials may not ride Amtrak, but many Americans do, not only in the Northeast Corridor but throughout this land."

Then another says, "To destroy Amtrak, a going concern that has taken 14 years to build, once dismantled it probably can never be replaced."

There is a big difference between holding down expenses and liquidating a program concerned with over \$3 billion in capital investments and over 30,000 skilled employees. I commend the members of the committee for getting this authorization through. . . . I know many, many of my constituents use Amtrak daily and I thank you on their behalf and thank you for passing this authorization bill that makes good sense. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Amtrak introduces "one-way + \$7" round-trip excursion fare systemwide! Applicable wherever one-way fare is \$50 or more, this 30-day ticket allows 2 stop-overs in most cases; costs only \$7 more than a one-way. Also available (without stopovers) in certain corridors where OW fares are under \$50. On sale now through May 30, 1986; good for travel Oct. 10, 1985 through June 29, 1986, but not during certain holiday periods.

Special "one-way + \$1" round-trip fare available for travel between Chicago, Joliet on the one hand, and Alton, St. Louis on the other. No stop-overs.

All Aboard America Fare reductions: 2-zone fare drops from \$250 to \$225; 3-zone fare drops from \$325 to \$275. Single-zone remains \$150. East Zone: Atlantic Ocean to Chicago/Milwaukee/New Orleans. West Zone: Pacific Ocean to El Paso/Albuquerque/Denver/Wolf Point. Central Zone: between East and West.