

Rothman Fights For Full Funding of Amtrak

For Immediate Release

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--Amtrak Budget Threatened to Be Cut by More than Half for
Next Fiscal Year--

Washington, D.C.- Congressman Steve Rothman voted this week on an amendment introduced by Rep. John Olver to fully fund Amtrak for the next fiscal year, during the House Appropriations Committee consideration of the Fiscal Year 2006 Transportation Appropriations bill. The proposed Transportation Appropriations bill by the Republican majority on the Committee cuts Amtrak funding to \$550 million, less than half of the amount it received last year. Rothman voted today to increase funding to \$1.2 billion. That amendment to increase funding failed on a vote of 27-34 on a straight party line vote, with all committee Democrats supporting increased funding for Amtrak and all Republicans opposing.

The Republican bill only funded the capital improvement program for the Northeast Corridor line, which runs from Washington D.C.'s Union Station to Boston's South Station, at \$50 million. This amount is hundreds of millions of dollars below what is needed to keep the Northeast Corridor in good repair.

"I am outraged that the Appropriations Committee failed to provide Amtrak with the funds it needs to operate safely. Just maintaining the tracks in New Jersey and making needed safety improvements will cost \$90 million," said Congressman Rothman. "If Amtrak were to uphold their agreement with the State of New Jersey to provide matching funds of \$45 million for track maintenance, that would only leave \$5 million left for the maintenance of the rest of the Northeast Corridor line. This bill doesn't even accomplish the stated goal of providing sufficient funds to the profitable and high usage Amtrak lines. I will continue to fight to make sure Amtrak receives the funding it needs."

Amtrak legislation will be considered on the floor of the House next week, and then by the U.S. Senate, which in the past, has funded Amtrak at a higher level. It is then expected to move to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign the FY 2006 Transportation Appropriations bill into law.

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