

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2019

Mr. Richard Anderson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We write to express concern about the changes Amtrak is implementing that will reduce the size of the Amtrak Police Department (APD) workforce. Cutting the number of Amtrak police could undermine the safety and security of the entire system. As a result, we request that you provide answers to our questions about this plan that are listed below.

The APD workforce is central to ensuring the safety and security of Amtrak passengers, workers, infrastructure, and the communities through which trains travel. Maintaining the safety and security of an intercity passenger rail network poses unique challenges. Unlike other transportation modes that operate in contained spaces, Amtrak's sprawling network consists of open and accessible track and stations across 46 states. Protecting this intricate network requires expertise that provide for expedient response times that help Amtrak's passengers feel safe while also minimizing delays that could have cascading effects on service.

The APD fulfills this mission by responding to incidents taking place onboard trains and in stations, ranging from assaults, robberies, and disorderly conduct, to violations of weapon laws and damage to Amtrak property. The APD also supports counterterrorism efforts by analyzing and disseminating intelligence information and helps stop the illegal transport of narcotics by seizing illicit drugs throughout the system. While Amtrak remains a safe system to travel on with overall low levels of crimes, the number of incidents has increased over recent years. From May 1, 2018, to April 30, 2019, the APD responded and filed reports on more than 18,500 incidents and made nearly 2,000 arrests, representing increases over the prior one-year period of 13 percent and nearly 29 percent, respectively.¹

Given the important role the APD plays, we are alarmed by the information shared with us by the Amtrak Fraternal Order of Police Labor Committee (FOP), which represents this workforce. The FOP was informed that Amtrak had made the decision to cut the APD workforce by 20 percent, or roughly 100 positions. Amtrak's changes began taking effect on June 1, 2019, and will continue over the next several years. Amtrak currently is authorized to employ 454 commissioned officers. This aggressive and expansive reduction in forces comes on top of the 23 vacant commissioned officer positions that Amtrak indicates currently exist.

¹ This annual data, provided by the Amtrak Fraternal Order of Police Labor Committee, encapsulates the number of incident reports and arrests made from May 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018, compared to those made during May 1, 2018, to April 30, 2019.

In response to Committee staff questions, Amtrak indicated that they are reviewing where the APD forces are needed most and how to increase their visibility – particularly on trains. While visibility is widely accepted as a deterrent to those contemplating committing violence, it is unclear to us how reducing the overall number of sworn officers will increase their physical presence.

We agree that it is prudent to ensure Amtrak's police force is best positioned to deter crimes and violence and to promptly respond when incidents occur; however, we are concerned that reducing the size of the force runs counter to your objective. Moreover, Amtrak failed to communicate with Congress about its plan, sharing only limited information after the issue was brought to light by the union concerned that its members' mission is being jeopardized. As a result, Congress has little detail about the data used to develop the plan, how it allegedly achieves Amtrak's redundancy reduction goals, or how it will unfold. For instance, Amtrak has not provided an estimate of the size of the cuts or identified which stations, facilities, or trains will be impacted. The lack of transparency surrounding this announced change and its potential impacts are troubling.

Amtrak's plan also runs counter to recent congressional efforts to improve the security of passenger rail, such as the enactment less than a year ago of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, which created the Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee to consider passenger rail security matters – an advisory committee on which Amtrak's Deputy Chief of Police for Strategic Operations currently sits.² The House of Representatives is also considering the Fiscal Year 2020 transportation spending bill which strongly rejects Amtrak's plans by prohibiting the bill's funds from being used to reduce the size of the APD below May 1, 2019 levels. Moreover, we know passenger rail systems remain a target of mass attacks, demonstrated by previous attacks on international passenger rail systems, including the August 2015 attack on a high-speed train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris. Now is not the time to reduce Amtrak's security presence.

In order to address our concerns, we request that Amtrak reply to each of the following questions no later than July 8, 2019.

- What analysis and data did Amtrak use in developing this plan? Have you consulted with the FOP and other security experts in developing this plan? Has Amtrak considered how these cuts will impact the APD's workforce workload and ability to expeditiously respond to incidents?
- Will this plan produce cost savings for Amtrak? If so, was this the primary factor for development of this reduction plan?
- How will the implementation of Amtrak's plan change the way the APD workforce is currently deployed? Which stations, facilities, or routes will be impacted by these changes? What level of reduction does Amtrak anticipate, and which specific workers or management personnel will be reduced?
- In stations or facilities where APD forces work alongside other law enforcement agencies, has Amtrak collaborated or communicated with those agencies about the changes you intend to implement? What commitments have been negotiated with these agencies to ensure adequate coverage?

² Section 1969 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, P.L. 115-254. The Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee advises the Transportation Security Administration on security matters relating to all surface transportation modes, including passenger rail. <https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/surface-transportation-security/committee-members>

- A December 2015 Workforce Planning Process report that the APD commissioned recommended that the APD maintain the then-authorized personnel levels. How do the current authorized and actual employment levels compare to those reflected in that report?³ For each of the last five years, please provide the total number of incidents for which the APD filed reports and the number of commissioned officers and sworn police officers.
- We understand Amtrak intends to reduce the APD workforce initially through attrition. If so, how will Amtrak assure retirements or resignations occur in regions where Amtrak has identified reductions are necessary? If the size of the APD workforce in a region becomes too small, will Amtrak hire in the region to prevent an unsafe drop in APD presence? Will members of the APD workforce be asked to move and serve in another region? If so, how will their pay rates and seniority be impacted?
- Does Amtrak anticipate cutting the APD workforce in addition to the reductions from attrition? How will the decision be made, and what are your plans for consulting with the FOP, nearby communities, and Congress on that decision?
- How long does it take to properly train and prepare an Amtrak police officer, and how would this impact Amtrak's ability to re-hire if the pending cuts are reversed?

We look forward to receiving your response. If you have questions or need further information, please contact the majority staff of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials at (202) 225-3274.

Sincerely,



PETER A. DeFAZIO
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure



DANIEL LIPINSKI
Chair
Subcommittee on Railroads,
Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials

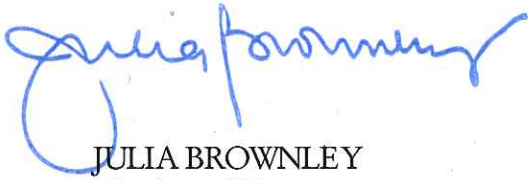


BRENDAN F. BOYLE
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³ "Workforce Planning Process," Strategic Policy Partnership, LLC, for the Amtrak Police Department, Issued December 2015, page 3.



JULIA BROWNLEY
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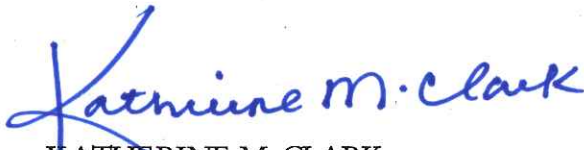
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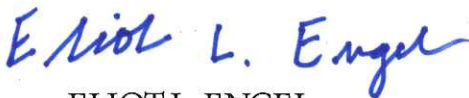
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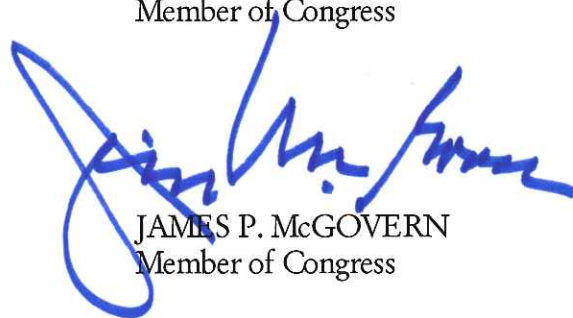
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