

December 4, 2018

Support Good Amtrak Jobs in California

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to sign on to Rep. Mark Takano's [letter](#) to Amtrak President and CEO Richard Anderson in opposition to Amtrak's announced intention to shut down its Riverside, CA call center location. This decision, set to take effect next month, would result in the loss of 500 good-paying union jobs in California and further undermine Amtrak's dedicated workforce.

While Amtrak claims this decision is due to a decrease in call volume at its Riverside location, we know that a contractor located in Port St. Lucie, Florida —Teleperformance Inc.—is slated to capture most of this work. In fact, Amtrak has asked the contractor to hire 150 additional individuals in anticipation of the closure in California and has even sent current Riverside employees to Florida to train replacements. We estimate that Teleperformance workers will make about half of what employees in Riverside currently earn and will not receive health or retirement benefits. Simply put, Amtrak is now pursuing a low-road labor model and seeking to avoid collective bargaining arrangements that cover the call center workforce.

Amtrak is fond of touting the value it places on its frontline workers and talks about the need to improve the so-called customer experience. Yet the company now seems more than willing to outsource customer-facing jobs to an outside operation and to abandon 500 dedicated workers who provide quality service every day. We find this move unacceptable, especially at a time when policy makers at all levels are seeking to raise wages and support jobs that can support families. It is also significant that the union representing these workers made major concessions as recently as August, and agreed to part-time arrangements to keep work in Riverside—an effort that now seems to have been forgotten by Amtrak.

Finally, it must be remembered that California spends almost \$90 million every year to support Amtrak service via the state-supported route program and even more to facilitate passenger rail throughout the state. Amtrak has a responsibility to support this passenger rail market and to act in a more responsible manner when it comes to their workers. While one might expect such conduct from a Wall Street firm, Amtrak, as a government corporation with a history of support from its workers, can and must do better.

We urge you to sign on to this letter and send a strong message to Amtrak that outsourcing jobs from California cannot stand and is not the way to sustain and grow our national passenger rail network.

Sincerely,

Larry I. Willis
President