

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**  
**SUBMITTED BY JAMES C. LITTLE**  
**INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT**  
**OF THE**  
**TRANSPORT WORKERS OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO**

**BEFORE THE**  
**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY AND**  
**INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION**

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**HEARING ON RAIL AND MASS TRANSIT SECURITY:**

**INDUSTRY AND LABOR PERSPECTIVE**

**FEBRUARY 13, 2007**

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Chairwoman Jackson Lee, Ranking Member Lungren, and other members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the more than 120,000 members of the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), we thank you for this opportunity to testify today at this very important hearing and give TWU's perspective on rail and mass transit security.

TWU's transportation Members are bus, subway, light and heavy rail operators, clerks and maintenance employees at transit, commuter and freight rail systems, school bus operators, rail onboard service workers, rail mechanics, and rail cleaners. Our Members are also employed in various capacities in the airline industry – including but not limited to flight attendants, aircraft maintenance technicians, and ramp service personnel. We understand the need to provide safe and secure transportation systems, because our Members were some of the first responders in New York after the dreadful attacks of September 11, 2001.

Other deadly terrorist attacks on major rail and transit systems around the globe, in places like Mumbai, India, the London Underground, Moscow and Madrid should have prompted our government to provide the necessary comprehensive strategy, oversight, guidance and funding to ensure protection of the nations railroads and transit systems. Even before these more recent threats, the bombings at the Paris Metro and the release of sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system pointed out vulnerabilities in public transportation. It is obvious that mass transportation systems are attractive targets for terrorists. Therefore, we applaud the efforts of Chairman Thompson, Chairwoman Jackson Lee and

the members of this committee in moving forward legislative initiatives in a bipartisan manner to protect our nation's transportation system.

The safety and security of our mass transit and rail system is of paramount importance to the leaders and members of TWU. In particular, we strongly believe that all frontline rail and transit employees should receive training to prepare them to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism. A comprehensive security training program for workers on the scene of a security threat is vital to securing and safeguarding our transit and rail networks. As with flight attendants and pilots in the airline industry, onboard service workers and conductors in rail as well as bus drivers, subway operators, conductors and toll booth personnel in transit are obviously the group of frontline workers that are best positioned to spot potential security breaches or other potential problems. Reports of threats, suspicious activities and potential problems are usually communicated to frontline workers by passengers. And, oftentimes frontline workers themselves discover the suspicious activity or threat. Thus, it is essential that these "eyes on the scene" receive full and proper training in how to handle these threats and activities with a specific protocol of action to follow.

Rail and transit first responders deserve proper training because 1) they are the first on the scene – arriving even before police, fire fighter, and emergency medical responders and what is done in the first few minutes is crucial to minimize the destruction and loss of life; 2) investing in worker security training is a sound investment; 3) a mandatory worker security training program enhances the layered approach in protecting the public

from destructive terrorist acts by giving frontline employees adequate tools to protect themselves and passengers from harm and 4) it is the right thing to do.

Funding for initiatives that strategically enable us to protect our nation and its workers is vital. We admire the committee's commitment to use meaningful technology to help in the course of planning, preparing and protecting our homeland. However, we were disappointed that the Administration failed to include in last year's FY 2007 DHS budget proposal a specific line item funding amount for transit security.

In the aviation industry, \$9 is spent on security for every passenger who flies. It is frightening to realize that we currently invest just one penny per rail and transit passenger on security.

But airline security measures are not without their flaws and we hopefully can learn from them as we implement security programs in transit and rail. The security training for our nation's flight attendants has never been properly funded nor has the piecemeal solution been an adequate strategy for flight attendant frontline workers. Instead, the crew member self defense training (CMSDT) program was doomed from the beginning without mandatory participation coupled with problematic training locations and dates.

Hopefully, we have learned from the poorly managed flight attendant program so that rail and transit frontline workers will be given the proper, structured, consistent, adequate and well distributed security training program that is needed to meet their needs. The

comparison of the work groups of flight attendants and onboard service workers is instructive. While flight attendants see to the comfort of passengers this is never allowed to interfere with or supplant their responsibilities for safety and now security.

Likewise, the passenger serving responsibilities of on-board rail workers can never be allowed to overshadow their responsibility for dealing with safety and security – tasks like communicating with passengers, train evacuation, etc. Both flight attendants and on-board rail workers undergo extensive first aid training. Both groups have as a priority the safety and security of passengers as both groups have rules, and federal regulations that govern both sets of workers receiving initial and recurrent emergency preparedness training (121.401 FAR and 49 CFR 239). Both groups work in an environment that is unique and involves numerous challenges that are either passenger or equipment related.

Numerous gaps and inconsistencies exist in our transportation security system. Though the “layered” approach to protecting passengers is a good one it cannot work effectively without properly training workers how to respond to suspicious activities. It is not enough to ask workers, the eyes and ears of their workplace to be vigilant and alert of potential security threats. They must be taught how to recognize potential problems, what protocols to follow in reporting and responding to potential threats and how best to protect themselves and their passengers from harm. Freight railroad workers also need training to properly and efficiently handle the security threats that they confront on their job as well.

Rafi Ron, former Director of Security at Tel-Aviv Ben-Gurion International Airport has testified before Congress that “training provides the skills and confidence...to employees who are present at every point in the system. No one is in a better position to recognize irregularities on the ground than the people who regularly work there.” We strongly echo these sentiments. Workers are the eyes and ears of potential breaches to security in their workplace. It is imperative that we arm them with the proper tool of security training to protect their passengers and themselves. As a result of attacks on public transportation systems in other parts of the world, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) testified recently before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs that these attacks “highlight the need to strengthen security on public transit systems in the US and to do so without delay.”

Officials from both FTA and TSA have publicly recognized the need for training. In fact, a list of 17 “action Items for Transit Agencies,” jointly-developed by TSA and FTA includes establishing and maintaining a security and emergency training program for all employees. Yet, little, if anything is being done to ensure that this training is provided. There is no “real” training being done on a comprehensive basis. Watching a short 10 or 15 min video does not prepare a worker for a real security incident. This method did not work in the airlines prior to 9/11 with the flight attendants and this method does not adequately prepare our frontline transit and rail workers.

From information sharing of intelligence to developing safety guidelines and standards to sharing best practices and expertise in development of programs that will enhance transit

and rail security, it is essential that the federal government ensure and use every means available to enhance and increase security. It is time for the federal government to step in and not only provide funding for the operating costs associated with training, but also to require all transit and rail systems to train each and every frontline employee. It is the role of the federal government to ensure that this happens. Leaving it exclusively to the will of the industry is not just insufficient but could lead to disastrous consequences.

The security of our rail and transit systems is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders. It is critical that the rail and transit employees who are on the scene where these threats strike be fully included in the implementation of any rail and transit security program. It is equally critical that they, through their representatives in labor, be fully included in all phases of planning and developing such a program. On behalf of the Transport Workers Union of America I look forward to working with this Committee to achieve these ends.