

Castle Supports Amendment to Save Amtrak -- June 14, 2006

Washington, D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle last night helped lead an effort to pass an amendment as part of the FY2007 Transportation-Treasury-HUD (TTHUD) Appropriations bill that would restore funding for Amtrak to \$1.114 billion, an increase of \$214 million, allowing the company to avoid bankruptcy and continue to operate. As co-chair of the Passenger Rail Caucus, Castle served as "lead whip" on the amendment, successfully ensuring the support of 71 Republicans who voted in favor of the provision. Without the amendment, the \$900 million appropriated to Amtrak would not have been enough to sustain the company's services and operations.

"This amendment is crucial to the survival of Amtrak, which has gone without adequate funding for too long. The end of Amtrak would mean the end of a critical transportation system here in the U.S., stranding millions of passengers and adding traffic to our already congested roads and airports. Amtrak is a benefit to our economy, employing almost 19,000 people throughout the country and is crucial to travel in Northeast corridor. I will not give up this fight and I am determined to ensure this system receives the necessary funding to guarantee the safety and long-term sustainability of passenger rail in this country," Castle said.

According to the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General, Amtrak needs about \$1.4 billion to improve its services and this amendment puts Amtrak on a course to achieve an appropriate level of funding.

If Amtrak's service were to be shut down, the repercussions would be far-reaching. Millions of rail passengers would be stranded; commuter operations would be disrupted; thousands of jobs would be eliminated; States would be forced to figure out how to pay for new service, under already tight budget constraints; taxes on freight railroads and their workers would increase as a result of decreased revenue for the Railroad Retirement and Unemployment