
CASTLE URGES COMPROMISE TO AVOID AMTRAK STRIKE -- JANUARY 15, 2008

Says Amtrak Management and Labor Unions Can Find Common Ground

Washington, DC -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle's office today hosted separate meetings with members of Amtrak's management and the Transportation Communications International Union. Earlier this month, a special board appointed by President Bush released its recommendations to settle a long-standing dispute between Amtrak and eight labor unions representing Amtrak employees - including hundreds of employees in Delaware.

The purpose of today's meetings was to discuss the 242 recommendations made by the Presidential Emergency Board, which was tasked with making non-binding rulings on key wage, healthcare, and work rule changes affecting Amtrak's workforce. Rep. Castle believes a compromise can be forged between Amtrak and union leaders to avoid a major shutdown of rail services on the northeast corridor.

"I have instructed my staff to do everything possible to bring these groups to the bargaining table and I am hopeful that we are making good progress through these small, focused meetings. I have met personally with union leaders and the President of Amtrak, underscoring my concern that an Amtrak strike would be extremely costly and burdensome for the thousands of Delawareans who travel on Amtrak and SEPTA everyday. It is incumbent upon us to settle these differences and make certain these trains keep running," said Rep. Castle.

According to press reports, if the parties do not reach an agreement by 12:01 a.m. on January 30, the unions plan to strike.