

**Statement of R. Hunter Biden, Nominee, Member of the Amtrak Reform Board**  
**Senate Confirmation Hearing**  
**June 8, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and I am honored that President Bush has nominated me to be a member of the Amtrak Reform Board. Amtrak touches so many facets of so many Americans lives, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the members of this Committee and the Congress to make sure that Amtrak continues to play that important role to so many people who rely on it daily. I see this appointment as a great opportunity to help turn around what can and must be a key component of our transportation system. Amtrak should be one of our success stories; right now it is one of our biggest challenges.

I believe that my experience in government, at the U.S. Department of Commerce working for both Secretary Daley and Secretary Mineta, and in the private sector, in both banking and the law has prepared me well for this position. At the same time, as a frequent commuter and Amtrak customer for over 30 years, I have literally logged thousands of miles on Amtrak. I hope that I can bring my perspective to the Board as one of the millions of customers who ride and depend upon Amtrak everyday. It has been through my experience as a customer that I have developed a deep respect for the organization and its employees, and I know how much they believe in and are committed to making Amtrak a safe and reliable service. It is also as a longtime Amtrak customer that I know first hand some of the many problems Amtrak faces as an organization.

Working together, I believe that members of the Board, members of Congress, the Administration and the employees of Amtrak can overcome many of the issues intercity rail faces today. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of that discussion and look forward to the challenge. Amtrak is too important to our economy for it not to be in the best financial health possible. I take the fiduciary responsibility required by the members of the Board very seriously, and believe that above all else that the American people expect that it's national rail system be run as safely, efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

I also recognize that Amtrak affects, and is affected by, many of the most important issues of the day. In an era of mounting energy concerns in which driving a car is getting more and more expensive, intercity rail must be part of the solution. A healthy national passenger rail system can provide millions of commuters with a reliable and hopefully cost-effective alternative to other forms of transportation. In addition, I believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century a robust, cost efficient national passenger rail system is a necessity, and that you can not look at the energy and environmental issues facing our country today without looking at intercity rail and Amtrak as a part of the solution.

Finally, if confirmed, I particularly look forward to working with the members of this Committee and the Congress to ensure that Amtrak is an integral part of our homeland security strategy. I believe that it is imperative that Amtrak work closely with federal and local law enforcement to make sure that our commuter rail system is safe from terrorist attack.

I hope to have the opportunity to work with the members of this Committee and the Congress to solve some of these challenges facing Amtrak.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and I welcome any questions the Committee may have.