

United States Senate

April 25, 2023

Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I am writing you today regarding the current slate of Amtrak Board of Director nominees. I know you understand the importance of rail travel and the role it plays across the United States. It is important that people in places like rural Montana have a voice at Amtrak to ensure we are not left behind. After careful review, I will be blocking the slate of nominees currently before the United States Senate.

I was proud to work with you on the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), especially on the provisions that will enable Amtrak to modernize its operations and continue to serve the country's needs for decades to come. One of my priorities in the IIJA was to make sure that Amtrak gets the support it needs to bring quality rail service to the whole country, not just the Northeast Corridor. In line with that, I worked with colleagues on a bipartisan basis to restructure the Amtrak Board of Directors so that it better reflects the nation's geographic diversity. Specifically, in addition to other requirements, Congress mandated in IIJA that no more than four members of Amtrak's Board come from the Northeast Corridor, which statute defines to include Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia.

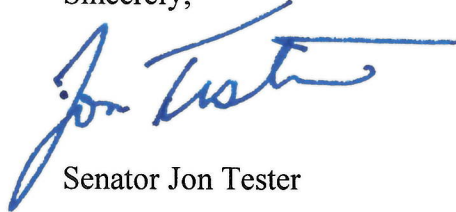
Of the six individuals currently nominated to serve as members of the Amtrak Board of Directors, five are from Northeast Corridor states. This exceeds what is allowed under the new IIJA requirements and deprives non-Northeast Corridor states of adequate representation on the Amtrak Board of Directors. Only one current nominee is from outside of the Northeast Corridor states.

Each of these nominees is individually qualified to serve as a member of the Amtrak Board. But it is critical that we respect and follow the rules and laws plainly laid out when making these decisions. Unfortunately, this slate of nominees fails to meet the requirements of the law and Congress's clear intent in including the geographic requirements in the legislation.

I ask that you take action to solve this issue and bring the slate of nominees into compliance with the IIJA requirements. I believe the board will be well served by adding a qualified candidate who has greater familiarity with the operations and customer base for Amtrak's long-distance and regional routes.

I stand ready to work with you and my colleagues to confirm these eventual nominees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Jon Tester