Testimony of Mr. Ronald Batory
Nominee to the Amtrak Board of Directors
United States Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
Hearing on Nominations, September 11, 2024

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Cruz and distinguished members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning as a nominee for Amtrak's Board of Directors.

I am a second-generation railroader. My father worked for the New York Central Railroad and later in his career was a full-time union official. After graduating from college in 1971, my first job was as an hourly employee with the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad. I spent the next 46 years in a variety of railroad positions, nearly all of which were focused on operations.

In 1994, I became the president of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago, the largest switching and terminal railroad in the United States whose services and facilities are used by all of the Class I railroads serving Chicago. From 2004 until 2017, I served as president of Conrail, a jointly-owned subsidiary of Norfolk Southern and CSX. Conrail provides local freight train operations and switching on behalf of those two railroads in the Philadelphia area and northern New Jersey, including along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, and in the Detroit, Michigan area.

As I was preparing to retire from the railroad industry and move to my current home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I decided to apply to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. At the time I assumed that position in February of 2018 following Senate confirmation, FRA and the railroad industry faced an enormous challenge. The final deadline for implementation of the statutory requirement to install positive train control, or PTC, on nearly 58,000 miles of track to reduce the risk of accidents was less than three years away, and it appeared that many railroads would miss that deadline. I took immediate actions to ensure that did not happen, including redeploying FRA staffing resources, providing additional technical assistance to railroads, and issuing public quarterly infographics tracking each railroad's progress. I am gratified to report that as of December 29, 2020, two days before the statutory deadline, all 41 railroads responsible for implementing PTC had done so on every mile of track on which it was required.

Among the other important FRA accomplishments during my tenure was the issuance of a final rule, long delayed by litigation following a previous FRA rulemaking, that established metrics and minimum standards for intercity passenger rail service. These metrics and standards

are used to measure Amtrak's performance, including customer satisfaction, on-time performance and the extent to which Amtrak is serving communities that are not well served or served at all by other public transportation modes, most of which are along long-distance routes.

In addition to my railroad operations experience, one of the things I brought to the role of FRA Administrator and would bring to the Amtrak Board is many decades of experience dealing with all railroad stakeholder groups, including freight and commuter railroads; rail labor; and federal, state and local officials. I believe in maintaining respectful relationships, and I recognize that collaboration is essential in everything the railroad industry does. I consider myself to be a fact-based leader who is empathetic and willing to listen and learn from others.

Safety has always been and will continue to be my highest priority. The opportunity to make railroads safer is one of the main reasons I sought the FRA Administrator job. As an Amtrak Board member, I would ensure that the company's leadership is focused on safety and prioritizing it when allocating limited funding.

I am very grateful for the opportunities the railroad industry has given me, and to the many people I worked with who taught me everything I know about railroading. I welcome the chance to continue to contribute to the industry.

Thank you, Madame Chair. I now look forward to answering the Committee's questions.