

Testimony of
The Honorable Leon (Lynn) A. Westmoreland
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Nomination Hearing – Amtrak Board of Directors
October 31, 2017

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee. Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here today, and an honor to be nominated to serve on the Amtrak Board of Directors by President Trump.

Like many Americans, I began my career as a small businessman, running and growing my own business, specializing in residential and light commercial construction. I developed an interest in the business as a young man, and once I had learned more about it, I established and built my own business, which I ran for twenty-two years before I was elected to Congress. My experiences taught me important lessons that have stayed with me throughout my life. I learned about the value of a dollar and the importance of careful management and hard work.

My career in public service started in 1992 when I was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, where I served for twelve years. In 2004, I was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and proudly served my Congressional constituents from 2005 to 2017. In the House, I served on the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Small Business, Government Reform, and Financial Services, which have prepared me well for a position on the Amtrak Board of Directors. Additionally, my service on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has equipped me with a unique perspective on transportation security related matters and I am eager to bring this experience to Amtrak in its efforts to provide the highest level of security across the system.

As you know, the Amtrak Board of Directors is designed by statute to oversee the operations of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, better known as Amtrak, and to manage and direct its business affairs. The Board sets the strategic direction for the company, within the guidelines set by Congress through the relevant Federal statutes. As a director, I would work closely with the other directors, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the management of Amtrak to ensure that the corporation carries out the mission contained in its statutory authorization: to efficiently and effectively operate the nation's intercity passenger rail system.

This is an important responsibility, and I take it very seriously. Amtrak serves 46 of the 48 contiguous states, and it operates a truly national system of transportation. On the National Network, which includes the long-distance and state supported trains, it provides important scheduled intercity transportation in many communities that have lost other transportation options with airline and bus service contraction in recent years. On the Northeast Corridor, where there are a multitude of critical infrastructure issues that need to be addressed, the NEC plays a vital role supporting both regional and national economic activity.

I strongly support Amtrak's role in the nation's transportation network, and I hope to bring my experience from both the private and public sectors to the Amtrak Board. It is my belief that U.S. taxpayers and Amtrak customers can and should receive the most efficient and effective intercity passenger rail service possible. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with my colleagues on the Board, the management of the company, the Department of Transportation, this Committee, and Congress to ensure that Amtrak is managed as safely and efficiently as possible.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and I will be happy to answer any questions.