

**Testimony of Mr. Samuel Lathem**  
**Nominee to the Amtrak Board of Directors**  
**United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**  
**Hearing on Nominations, September 7, 2022**

Good morning, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and other members of the Committee. My name is Samuel E. Lathem, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

Let me tell you about my background. I began working at the Chrysler Plant in Newark, Delaware in 1965. I served in numerous leadership positions as a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and with the AFL-CIO, culminating in my election as President of the Delaware State AFL-CIO in 2003. I also served as Administrator of the UAW-Chrysler Training Center at the Newark Plant.

I have decades of experience as a Board member of governmental and quasi-governmental entities. Since 2001, I have been a Commissioner of the Delaware River Bay Authority, or DRBA, and currently serve as Vice Chair. The DRBA, a bi-state quasi-governmental corporation, operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, three airports, and the Cape May-Lewes Ferry. I am also a former Board member of the Diamond State Port Corporation, a corporate entity of the State of Delaware that operates the Port of Wilmington.

Like Amtrak, DRBA and Diamond State are governmentally created entities with a public mission that engage in commercial transportation activities that generate much of their funding. The Cape May-Lewes Ferry carries over 700,000 passengers a year and is an essential service for many of its passengers. My involvement with public transportation through the Ferry is one of the things that made me interested in serving on Amtrak's Board.

I have extensive experience in the non-profit sector as a Board member for numerous charitable, educational, labor, and citizen organizations. These organizations include Junior Achievement, the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, the United Way of Delaware, and the 4-H Foundation Committee. I formerly chaired the Delaware Advisory Council on Career and Vocational Education. I am also an ordained Baptist preacher and serve as Associate Minister at Cornerstone Fellowship Baptist Church in Wilmington.

I know how important Amtrak is, not just to travelers but to the communities where its employees work and live throughout the country. I live in Bear, Delaware, where one of Amtrak's three major equipment maintenance facilities is located. Amtrak service in rural areas is of particular interest to me. This may surprise some people, but outside of the Wilmington area, Delaware is a predominantly rural state. From my involvement in statewide organizations, I know many people who live in rural parts of Delaware who don't have access to Amtrak or other public transportation services they want and need.

From my experience in transportation and labor organizations, and many years of service on a wide variety of Boards, I would bring a unique perspective to Amtrak's Board if confirmed. I am very familiar with the challenges faced by organizations like Amtrak that require both a public mission and engagement in commercial business activities, while simultaneously being accountable to elected and governmental officials. As a union official and a Board member of organizations with agreement-covered workforces, I have worked on both sides of labor-management issues. Twenty-one years of service on a bi-state Board gives me experience in dealing with multiple governmental jurisdictions that sometimes support different objectives. I learned how to work with people with different views and perspectives, and the importance of seeking compromises that produce a "win/win" for both sides.

I believe my experience in vocational education and training is particularly relevant, because one of Amtrak's biggest challenges will be finding and training large numbers of workers to construct projects funded by last year's Infrastructure Bill. I am interested in looking into Amtrak's current efforts to recruit from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), something I know the Ranking Member and others on this Committee care about deeply.

I thank you for your time, and if confirmed look forward to the serving on Amtrak's Board.