

**Opening Statement of
Albert A. DiClemente
Nominated for the Amtrak Board of Directors
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.
November 18, 2009**

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN

THIS NOMINATION REPRESENTS AN ENOURMOUS HONOR TO ME, AND I AM VERY APPRECIATIVE AND GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE CONSIDERED TO SERVE ON THE AMTRAK BOARD. I WANT TO THANK THE PRESIDENT – MY FRIEND AND FORMER BOSS, VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN – CHAIRMAN ROCKEFELLER, RANKING MEMBER HUTCHISON, THE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE – AND OF COURSE MY FAMILY FOR ALL THEIR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM A BELIEVER IN THE CRITICAL ROLE THAT AMTRAK PLAYS IN THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION FABRIC OF OUR COUNTRY. I AM ALSO FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF AMTRAK IN MY HOME STATE OF DELAWARE, WHERE A NUMBER OF KEY AMTRAK FACILITIES CURRENTLY RESIDE. I AM HOPING FOR AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH THE 19,000 MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE CURRENTLY PART OF THE AMTRAK FAMILY.

OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING A NUMBER OF THOSE EMPLOYEES. I MET THEM WHILE WORKING FOR THEN, SENATOR BIDEN, DURING OUR REGULAR TRIPS TO THE AMTRAK SHOPS IN

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE. I ALSO RECALL AS A SMALL BOY, MEETING MANY OF THEM, WHEN I WOULD GO TO THE WILMINGTON SHOPS TO MEET MY DAD. MY FATHER WORKED FOR RAILROADS HIS WHOLE LIFE, AND RETIRED FROM AMTRAK IN 1976. HE WAS A MASTER BLACKSMITH AND WELDER, AND TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN HIS WORK – AS DID THE OTHER CRAFT MEMBERS IN THE WILMINGTON SHOPS. I WAS ALWAYS STRUCK BY THEIR CAMARADERIE AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE VERY DIFFICULT AND DEMANDING WORK AT HAND. IT WAS NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE MONEY OR THE WORKING CONDITIONS, WHICH WERE SPARTAN AT BEST, BUT RATHER THE COMMITMENT THEY HAD TO THE MISSION OF SAFE AND RELIABLE TRAVEL FOR THEIR FELLOW AMERICANS – AND A COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER. THEY WERE A FAMILY MR. CHAIRMAN – PART OF THE AMTRAK FAMILY. THEY LOOKED AFTER ONE ANOTHER FROM A SAFETY PERSPECTIVE, AND BELIEVED IN EACH OTHER FROM A MISSION STANDPOINT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH THESE DEDICATED WOMEN AND MEN OF AMTRAK. I BELIEVE TO THE CORE OF MY BEING THAT AMTRAK'S BEST DAYS LIE AHEAD OF US. THERE IS MUCH WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES AND I AM HONORED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF THE TEAM THAT WILL FACE THOSE CHALLENGES AND HELP LEAD AMTRAK AS A WORLD CLASS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AMTRAK HAS ALWAYS HELD A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART, AND INDEED, IS PART OF MY DNA. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING OF SERVICE TO THE MISSION OF AMTRAK, AND, IF CONFIRMED, I WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON THE BOARD.

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION OF MY NOMINATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING ANY QUESTIONS YOU AND THE COMMITTEE MAY HAVE.