

**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 11, 2024**

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

I began working at the Chrysler Plant in Newark, Delaware in 1965 and retired from it 39 years later. I served in numerous union leadership positions as a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW), and as President of the Delaware State AFL-CIO. 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 government-created entities. Since 2001, I have been a Commissioner of the Delaware River Bay Authority, or DRBA, which operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, three airports, and the Cape May-Lewes Ferry. I currently serve as DRBA's Chair. I am also a former Board member of the Diamond State Port Corporation, which operates the Port of Wilmington.

Like Amtrak, DRBA and Diamond State have a public mission but earn much of their revenue from providing transportation-related services to customers. The Cape May-Lewes Ferry carries over 700,000 passengers a year and is an essential service for many of its passengers. My experience with public transportation through the Ferry is one of the reasons I am interested in serving on Amtrak's Board.

I have also served on the Boards of many charitable, educational, labor, and citizen organizations, including 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 also serve as Associate Minister at Cornerstone Fellowship Baptist Church in Wilmington. Before going to work in the automobile industry, I served in the Army from 1963 to 1965 at Fort Hood in the Texas 1st Armored Division. I received the Delaware Distinguished Medal from the State of Delaware Department of Military Affairs Office of the Adjutant General.

I know firsthand how important Amtrak is to travelers, businesses, and to the communities it serves and in which its employees work and live. I spent my working career in an automobile plant located next to, and served by freight trains operating over, Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. I live in Bear, Delaware, where one of Amtrak's three major equipment maintenance facilities is located. As a lifelong resident of Delaware, a predominantly rural state outside of the Wilmington area, who has been involved with and led statewide organizations, I appreciate the importance of Amtrak and other public transportation services to rural communities.

I have worked on both sides of labor-management issues as a union official and a Board member of organizations with agreement-covered workforces. I know 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 will be particularly useful at a time when Amtrak has been hiring large numbers of new workers to carry out major construction projects funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. I recognize how important it is for Amtrak to work with its labor unions to provide good jobs, working conditions and training for both its experienced and new employees.

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