

**Questions for the Record**

**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

**MAJORITY**

*“Nominations of Joel Matthew Szabat to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors,  
Anthony Rosario Coscia to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors  
Christopher Koos to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors,  
Alvin Brown to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board”*

10:00 AM, June 21, 2023

## SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL)

### *Topic: Chicago Hub Improvement Project*

Amtrak recently applied for Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail funding for the Chicago Hub Improvement Program or “CHIP.” The full scope of this application is more than \$1 billion.

Funding the CHIP would benefit States across the Midwest, including:

- Indiana, where it would improve service between Chicago and Indianapolis.
- Michigan, where it would improve travel time on routes to Detroit, Port Huron and Grand Rapids.
- Missouri, where it would improve service between Kansas City and St. Louis.
- Wisconsin, where it would expand service between Milwaukee and Chicago as well as service to Madison, Eau Claire and establish new service to Green Bay.

1. Please explain why these kinds of improvements are so critical for the future of intercity passenger rail across the Midwest, and what the consequences will be in the coming years if we don't make this investment?

**Response:** Chicago is clearly the most important hub in Amtrak's National Network. Modernization of the infrastructure there is critical to improved service nationwide.

2. If confirmed, will you commit to visiting Chicago to see the proposed hub improvements?

**Response:** I am frequently in Chicago via Amtrak, so yes.

## SENATOR RAPHAEL WARNOCK (D-GA)

### *Topic: Amtrak Expansion and Safety in the Southeast*

I am concerned by reports of delays and stoppages on Amtrak routes, and the general lack of expansion of passenger rail service beyond the Northeast Corridor. For example, last year, passengers on the Crescent train, which has three stops in Georgia, were stuck on the train for hours due to winter storms without food, functioning toilets, and information about what was to come.<sup>1</sup> This March, an Amtrak train from New Orleans to Atlanta was delayed after the train struck a car at a train crossing.<sup>2</sup> The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which I was proud to support, includes nearly \$13 billion for Amtrak grants for activities associated with the National Network and over \$1.3 billion in funding for the Federal Railroad Administration to carry out railroad safety activities. This support is a good starting point, but there is clearly more work to be done to expand rail access in Georgia and the greater southeast.

1. What actions can or should Congress take to support the expansion of Amtrak service in the Southeast, particularly in Georgia?

**Response:** As a potential Amtrak Board Member, I support Amtrak's current vision to improve existing routes and working with States and their Departments of Transportation to expand service to currently unserved key corridors.

2. What steps can Congress take to ensure that Amtrak trains operating on the National Network are safe and on time for passengers?

**Response:** I realize the top priorities for Congress are safety and on-time performance. The freight railroads over which Amtrak operates must be held accountable for meeting agreed-upon timetables. As an Amtrak Board Member these would also be top priorities for me and I look forward to working with you on them, if confirmed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ajc.com/neighborhoods/north-fulton/atlanta-amtrak-passengers-trapped-30-plus-hours-on-train/77QSQTWQDNEW5F7WEC6KCIDR6M/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/amtrak-train-strikes-suv-douglas-county>