

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEES:

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JUDICIARY

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

706 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

(202) 224-2823

FAX: (202) 224-9673

90 STATE HOUSE SQUARE, TENTH FLOOR  
HARTFORD, CT 06103

(860) 258-6940

FAX: (860) 258-6958

915 LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD, SUITE 304  
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

(203) 330-0598

FAX: (203) 330-0608

<http://blumenthal.senate.gov>

November 9, 2018

Mr. Richard H. Anderson  
President and CEO  
Amtrak  
60 Massachusetts Avenue, Northeast  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I write to express my concern with recent reports indicating inadequate intercity and commuter rail service along the Hartford and Shore Line East lines due to overcrowding. These rail lines provide an essential commuting option for many residents of Connecticut and are key to mitigating heavy traffic and congestion on local highways, Interstate 95, and Interstate 91. I urge Amtrak to work closely with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) on immediate and long-term solutions to issues of overcrowding – ensuring reliable rail service for the traveling public in the state.

As you know, the State of Connecticut has paid \$769 million to upgrade and improve service on the Amtrak-owned Hartford Line. Now, troubling reports indicate that Amtrak is not holding up its end of the deal and is operating with two-car trains that do not meet the demands of Connecticut's ridership.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, on the Hartford Line, it was reported that on October 28, 2018, Connecticut rail (CTrail) and U-Pass ticketed passengers were kicked-off of an overcrowded Amtrak train, despite Amtrak's commitment to cross-honor CTrail and U-Pass ticket holders.<sup>2</sup> This is simply unacceptable – leaving Connecticut students and paying customers to bear the burden of service shortcomings. On the Shore Line East line, recent track work has resulted in unreasonable delays and cancelations frequently leaving commuters stranded for hours and without a way home. Building commuter participation – a goal we all share – is impossible if people cannot rely on timely access to trains. Furthermore, increased use of commuter trains should be encouraged, not discouraged by kicking paid customers off trains.

I am a staunch supporter of Amtrak's service and infrastructure projects in the Northeast Corridor and in Connecticut. I also appreciate ConnDOT has asked Amtrak to address these

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<sup>1</sup>Jim Cameron, "Getting There: Amtrak service failing in Connecticut", *CTPost*, November 5, 2018, <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Getting-There-Amtrak-service-failing-in-13348280.php>.

<sup>2</sup>Frankie Graziano, "As Ridership Booms On the Hartford Line, CTrail Riders Are Being Kicked Off Amtrak Trains", *WNPR*, October 26, 2018, <http://www.wnpr.org/post/ridership-booms-hartford-line-ctrail-riders-are-being-kicked-amtrak-trains>.

concerns by having Amtrak provide Shore Line East customers with free rides in December. However, more needs to be done to improve both the capacity and frequency of rail service on the Hartford and Shore Line East lines. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to work with ConnDOT on immediate and long-term solutions to resolve overcrowding issues, including the consideration of increased service and additional passenger cars to successfully meet demands.

Please provide to my office by December 7, 2018 documentation explaining how you intend to resolve these issues. Your attention to this important matter is greatly appreciated and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate