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STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY

I am John E. Fogarty, and I have the honor to represent the Second Congressional District of Rhode Island in the United States House of Representatives in Washington. I am appearing here today to oppose the discontinuance of passenger train service between New London, Connecticut and Providence, Rhode Island.

I feel that the general public today is being unfairly treated in the matter of passenger train service. Trains built communities, created towns and cities, and accordingly brought American citizens to these places. The citizens, in turn, could ply their trades, improve their welfare and provide attractive homes for their families, simply because passenger trains could transport them inexpensively and safely to their offices and shops. The trains were responsible for presenting an entirely new way of life for the people of our country. In my own state of Rhode Island, the commuter-way-of-life is a world unto its own.

Entire communities in Rhode Island ^{and} Connecticut are made up of the worker who commutes to his place of business by train. Now this way of life is threatened. The railroads are responsible. Simply, the case is this: they want to discontinue this passenger train service that they have provided for so many years. The public and the individual citizen is being completely ignored in the subject.

It may be well to explore the reason that the New Haven Railroad wishes to take away their service. Their prime excuse is that they

are going bankrupt -- that passenger service does not pay -- but I ask the question, are they trying to make it pay? Certainly the United States Government has done more than its share to help the so-called ailing railroad. More than six and one half million dollars has been poured into the railroad by the states of New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and the Federal Government. The list of loans granted the -- and I quote -- "poverty-stricken" New Haven is great. Yet, despite this assistance of magnitude, they seek to further abolish its service. I challenge this and I am joined in this challenge by many legislative leaders, labor groups, and most of all, by the public that sees their way of life being curtailed.

There was a clear understanding, at the time the loans were given the New Haven, that they would continue their service; even improve it. This understanding is obviously being ignored by the railroad.

New Haven, Connecticut and Providence, Rhode Island are in a thickly populated area. One can glean this from simply scanning a map of the United States. It is also populated by not only the average worker, but by men and women of prominence in finance, industry, business and the professions. Highways are already clogged to an unbelievable degree; plane service would certainly be of little or no use to these people. The passenger-commuter train is their only means of decent transportation upon which they can rely. How are they expected to continue going to and fro from their offices if there is no suitable transportation? Will their moving to other communities that do offer transportation not affect the economy and growth of the one they leave? Are they to continually be ignored when they are the principle tax-payers who contribute to the loans

for the railroad. I sincerely hope not.

The railroad industry is, in essence, a public utility; much like the electric power companies or the telephone companies. Think for a moment, if you will, what would happen to our country if suddenly the electric company in your area decide to abandon the power there, with the excuse that they were too "poor" to supply it. It simply could not be done, Think too, of the utter stark confusion if all telephone service were to be cut off in your city or town. Cut off because the company thought it could not afford to give that service any longer. It would not be tolerated!

Why, then, is a railroad allowed this unthinkable privilege? Why is the general public passed over so lightly when it comes to their transportation needs? For over seventy years businessmen and women have used the passenger service that is now threatened with abandonment.

It surely cannot be that the ICC and the Congress wish this to happen. They have shown this in the many times that they have rescued the railroad financially. Is it not so that perhaps the New Haven needs some new management and closer scrutiny rather than cutting off the passenger train entirely?

I have a Bill before Congress at the present moment. It is H.R. 8502. The Bill is designed to repeal Section 13a of the Interstate Commerce Act. There is no question in my mind that this legislation should be passed if we are to continue to have adequate train service in our country. 13a of the Interstate Commerce Act, which Congress enacted in 1958, now allows any railroad to discontinue any train simply by posting a notice. This is

done on their own initiative, with little or no regard for the public that it affects. If the ICC does not move to stay that discontinuance, the train is automatically eliminated.

Along these lines, the Brotherhood of Locomotive ^{Engineers} ~~Enginemen~~ recently made an interesting survey on the effects resulting from Section 13a. It graphically illustrates the different results which occur when railroad operators request discontinuance permission from state regulatory bodies and the ICC.

Intrastate trains are still controlled by state regulatory bodies with appeal provisions by the carrier to the ICC. The attitude of the ICC on such matters as train abandonments, as compared with state regulatory bodies, is indicated by the number of passenger train discontinuances granted by the federal body in relation to the number granted at the state level.

During the period the ICC granted a total of 201 as compared to 44 by state bodies. The federal agency received a total of 370 such requests to 152 by the state bodies. Still pending before the ICC are 71 requests for train discontinuances, while only two remain for action by the individual states.

President Gilbert of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Enginemen finds pertinent information in the facts found by the survey. He points out that when control is kept by the states, officials making the decision on discontinuance have much more interest, much more intimate knowledge

of local need for service than do Interstate Commerce Commissioners in Washington. Gilbert said, and I quote; "The disturbing fact about this situation is that the ICC, in most instances, permitted the railroads to drop trains after state commissions had ordered the carriers to continue service in the public interest."

I cite this survey -- and Mr. Gilbert's statements -- because I am heartily in accord and agreement. In the case of the passenger train service being abandoned between Providence and New Haven, no one could be more acutely acquainted with the facts of its need to remain than my constituents. No one could be more cognizant of the train service's worth than I. We in Rhode Island need, and need desperately, our means of transportation. In fact, we need more -- not less.