



# PASSENGERS Voice

NOVEMBER 2019 | VOL. 53, NO. 10

## THANK YOU!

As the Rail Passengers Association's Chairman of the Board and Finance Committee Chair, we wanted to express our sincere appreciation for your support.

Without your belief in the mission of the Rail Passengers Association coupled with your advocacy work at the local, state, and national levels, and financial support through membership and donations, the Rail Passengers Association would not have the influence it has. We've worked hard to expand the Association's reach to better support our mission of "More Trains, Better Trains." These efforts have been hugely successful: our reputation, media impact, Congressional access, and policy influence are at levels not seen in decades. Your partnership is the reason we are growing and succeeding.

### We'd like to share a few stories with you about your fellow rail passengers:

- Rail Passengers member Barbara rides the train from her small community in Montana, the only daily public transportation to other cities; but now her station lacks an agent to help her with her journey.
- Tony rides the train from his office in New Jersey to Maryland for meetings and wishes there was more frequent service, cleaner

trains, and smoother tracks.

- Randy is wheelchair-bound and rides the train from his station in Nebraska to visit relatives in another state; he wishes trains ran on time.
- Juan and his family use their vacation time to ride the train and enjoy a West Coast holiday but complains that trains are old and run down.
- Claire goes to school in Ohio and travels home to Illinois regularly but complains that the food service on trains leaves a lot to be desired.

Are you satisfied with the current state of passenger rail in our country today? We sure aren't.

That's why we are working to make sure that when the passenger rail reauthorization comes up before Congress in 2020, we have your voice to improve train travel for the future.

- Your Rail Passengers Association knows that you want more trains to more cities and towns
- Trains that leave and arrive on time



- Faster trains that get you to your destination more quickly than driving
- Safe, clean, modern, and comfortable trains
- Quality onboard food and beverage choices

You've told us this from hundreds and hundreds of travel reviews you've submitted to our website, the phone calls you've made to

**SUPPORT**, p. 2

**“I see the RPA as a much-needed advocate on behalf of the many people who use and need a viable and, hopefully, expanding passenger rail system.”**

Dwight Phillips,  
Rail Passengers Member



# RAIL PASSENGERS

ASSOCIATION

## ©National Association of Railroad Passengers

1200 G Street, NW, Suite 240  
Washington, DC 20005-3818  
202-408-8362 / 202-408-8287 (fax)

[www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org) • [narp@narpmail.org](mailto:narp@narpmail.org)

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Joseph Aiello (Ext. 3210), Field Coordinator  
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## SUPPORT, from p. 1

the office, and the letters you've written to staff.

We hear you and we have been working with Amtrak and other rail providers, Congress, and other elected and appointed officials to strengthen the national network and elevate your experience when you travel by train.

We've made big strides in the last four years with the FAST Act, the first-time passenger rail has had a place at the table for dedicated transportation funding. Congressional office holders are coming to us and asking what our members want and need, a refreshing change from previous decades. We're armed and approaching 2020 with fresh, new ideas.

## WAYS TO GIVE... DONATE BY CASH, CHECK OR CREDIT CARD VIA MAIL OR ONLINE

A donation of cash is the most direct way to support the Rail Passengers Association.

You benefit from a charitable tax credit while taking positive action to help the Rail Passengers Association work on your behalf.

You can make a gift online by visiting <http://railpassengers.org/end-of-year2019> or by sending a check, cash or money order to the office



by using the "Mail in donation form."

To receive a tax receipt for 2019 purposes, your gift must be processed no later than 11:59pm on December 31, 2019.

Please note that donations are considered as separate gifts above and beyond membership and DO NOT count towards membership fees.

There's a lot more we can do, but we can't do it without your help.

As you make your end of year giving decisions, please consider including the Rail Passengers Association in your financial support plans. By helping us in our quest to bring more trains, better trains to more towns and cities, you're also helping Barbara in Montana, Tony in New Jersey, Randy in Nebraska, Juan and his family, Claire in Ohio and all of the other 40 million rail passengers across the country.

For those of you that can make an extra special effort: give the gift of membership and travel with a partner! Help others learn about our work while you both enjoy discounted travel and support

the National Network. Join Rail Passengers at the Gold Advocate (\$550) or Silver Rail Level (\$1,000) and you'll also receive access to all of Amtrak's Acela and national Metropolitan Lounges for a year, even with a coach or business class ticket.

Your donation to the Rail Passengers Association, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is tax deductible.

Thank you for supporting passenger rail, a travel choice Americans want.

**Peter J LeCody**  
Voluntary Chair

**T.J. Girsch**  
Voluntary Vice Chair, Finance



**RAIL PASSENGERS**  
ASSOCIATION

## MAIL-IN DONATION FORM

Mail this completed form, along with your check or money order to Rail Passengers Association.

**Thank you for your gift!**

### DONOR INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) Home / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### GIFT INFORMATION

Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type (circle one): **Check/Money Order** / Visa / MasterCard / American Express / Discover

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date (MM/YY): \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_

(NOTE: Without an accurate expiration date and CVV we will not be able to process your donation.)

( ) I'd like to make this a monthly donation, please sign me up.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE MAIL YOUR GIFT TO:

Rail Passengers Association  
Attention: EOY/Jonsie Stone  
1200 G Street NW, Suite 240  
Washington, DC 20005

#### Remember to:

- Make your check payable to the Rail Passengers Association
- Sign your check
- Include the credit card expiration date **AND** CVV number

**\*\*\*Note:** To receive a tax receipt for 2019 purposes, your gift **MUST** be postmarked no later than December 31, 2019.

# THE YEAR IN RAIL PASSENGERS ADVOCACY WINS



**2019 was a year of significant advocacy wins. Your countless hours of advocacy work at the local, state, and national levels contributed to great news for passenger rail.**

- **The Supreme Court** rejected the Association of American Railroads' petition to hear an appeal of a crucial victory for passenger rail last summer in the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. That rejection cleared the way for Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to again work together to set metrics and standards for on-time performance and defend your right to be on time.
- **The Supreme Court's** decision is terrific news for everyone who relies on trains to get to work, to school, to visit friends and family, and it's even more important for our disabled, seniors and veterans for whom trains are a lifeline and late trains are a threat. The Rail Passengers Association intends to hold the Association of American Railroads, Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the host railroads accountable for putting passengers first!
- **The House Appropriations Committee** approved a transportation budget for FY 2020 sending the bill to the floor of the House for consideration. The news is great for passengers in Congress, where Rail Passengers advocacy continues to produce concrete funding and policy gains. The Committee report also tweaked Amtrak for ignoring congressional intent on customer-facing issues like station agents and long-distance trains, and strongly supported maintaining a truly national long distance network that improves transportation options for rural areas and serves stations staffed with actual station agents. Lawmakers also faulted the Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration for foot-dragging on grants, for thumbing their noses at Congress, and for setting up new Amtrak grant conditions that would give FRA outsize influence in Amtrak's capital decisions.
- **Lawmakers** also heard you when we said that Amtrak wasn't listening hard enough to riders' concerns. Appropriators directed Amtrak to "conduct comprehensive outreach and consultation" with a whole range of stakeholders, including "passenger rail organizations," noting that Amtrak "must engage in an open and transparent process" which takes into account anyone who might be affected by changes, for good or ill.
- **Congressional members** repeated that theme of transparency throughout the report. They made a point of highlighting the need for better communication and transparency, not only in individual provisions – such as those dealing with station agents or charter moves – but going so far as to create a separate report section headed "Communication With Stakeholders."
- "...the Committee is concerned that Amtrak continues to make and implement changes to operations and services without providing the public or its employees adequate time to understand proposed changes and provide feedback," the report said. "Amtrak has

## STORIES FROM OUR MEMBERS

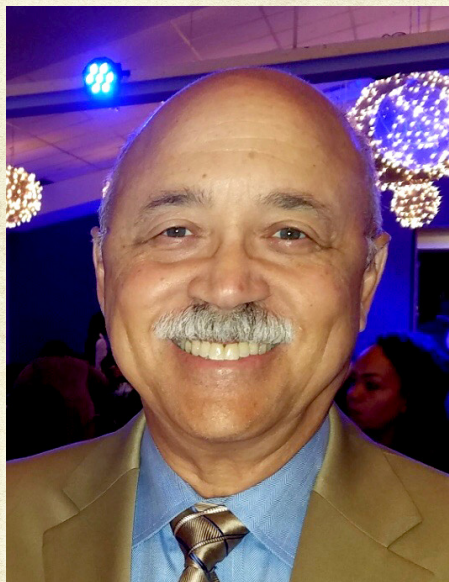
People who care about the future of America's rail transportation and what they're doing to make a difference.

### DWIGHT PHILLIPS:

"I have always viewed intercity passenger rail as a very integral part of the nation's transportation system.

My interest in passenger rail travel began in 1960, following my initial long-distance train ride to Georgia, with my mother, to visit family. My next long-distance train trip occurred in 1967, when our family journeyed west, on the California Zephyr. In the early 1990's, I became aware of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP) and joined the organization. I attended the organization's meetings, on a regular basis. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the members' advocacy efforts, on behalf of passenger rail.

At some point, I became aware of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), a national passenger rail organization, and decided to join it too. Based upon the contents of the newsletters, I saw that the organization had an excellent vision of what the



Dwight Phillips  
(Photo Credit: Dwight Phillips)

passenger rail system should be in America.

In early 2006, I was approached by a couple of members of MARP, who were also members of NARP, and solicited to run for a position of what was then the board of directors of NARP. I agreed to do so and, fortunately, I was elected. I have been on what is now known as the Council of Representatives,

ever since then.

I have always viewed intercity passenger rail as a very integral part of the nation's transportation system. While passenger rail will never again attain the status of being the primary mover of people, from one location to another, it still provides a very clean and efficient means of traveling from one place to another in this country. Most importantly, for many people, it is their only means of traveling long distances. Even for those who do have the ability to travel by other means of transportation, passenger still offers a viable alternative to spending hours behind the wheel of a car or sitting in a cramped seat on an airplane.

I see the RPA as a much-needed advocate on behalf of the many people who use and need a viable and, hopefully, expanding passenger rail system. It is extremely important for the organization to continue to educate the members of both the national and state legislative bodies about important issues concerning passenger rail."

## PLEASE REMEMBER THE RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION



As we move closer to the holiday season, your end of year giving decisions may be forefront. We hope the Rail Passengers Association is part of your philanthropic plans. Your generous gift helps us work to build support for a modern, more efficient national passenger rail network. Jonsie and Kim would love to help facilitate your gift or answer any questions you may have. Below is their contact information:

**Jonsie Stone**  
202-408-8362 x 3207  
[jstone@narprail.org](mailto:jstone@narprail.org)

**Kim Williams**  
202-408-8362 x 3123  
[kwilliams@narprail.org](mailto:kwilliams@narprail.org)

# HOW TO GIVE FROM YOUR DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

## GIFTS FROM DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

If you have a donor advised fund, please consider recommending a grant from your fund to the Rail Passengers Association. It is a great way to maintain flexibility with your support and support expansion and preservation efforts for America's rail transportation.

Give now from your  
Donor-Advised Fund

## WHAT IS A DONOR ADVISED FUND?

For the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations of importance to you, you can create and pay into a donor-advised fund – which acts like a charitable investment account.

When you contribute assets (cash, securities, etc.) to a donor-advised fund you are generally able to take an immediate tax deduction. Those funds are invested, and you can recommend grants to qualified IRS public charities.

Due to their ease of giving and advantageous tax benefit, donor-advised funds are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the US. As a donor you want your charitable decision to be as effective as possible.

## 6 WAYS YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT WITH YOUR DONOR-ADVISED FUND:

- **Memorialize**, honor, or commemorate a loved one or an event
- **Avoid capital gains** by first transferring appreciated stock to your DAF and then gifting it in minutes
- **Teach your loved ones** about charity and why you believe in giving back.
- **Build a sense of community** (and make a bigger impact) by forming “giving circles” with other donor-advised fund owners including friends and family members.
- **Bundle your charitable gifts** (doing so could result in an opportunity to itemize your deductions in the same year).
- **Leave all or a portion of your account to charity** simply by changing your beneficiary designation.

**Note:** If you haven't considered establishing a donor advised fund, but it is of interest, please work with your financial advisor. If you have a donor advised fund, please consider recommending a grant from your fund to Rail Passengers Association. It is a great way to maintain the flexibility of your contributions and support expansion and preservation efforts for America's rail transportation. For more information, go to <http://myimpact.railpassengers.org/daf>.

## WINS, from p. 4

made changes to policies and procedures relating to charter trains, private cars, station agents, call centers, food and beverage service, and law enforcement, all of which have impacts on its ridership, employees, and communities. Therefore, the Committee directs Amtrak to increase engagement with customers, employees, stakeholders, and the public on proposals to change operations and services, including providing an opportunity to comment on policies prior to finalizing decisions.”

- **The rights** of rural, small town Americans to access passenger rail was forefront during a hearing titled “Amtrak: Next Steps for Passenger Rail” held by

the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The hearing produced several noteworthy and significant moments, which will no doubt play a big part in shaping intercity rail programs and Amtrak in the upcoming rail reauthorization.

- **The hearing** was vindication of the work accomplished by the Rail Passengers Association for more than 50 years. Our policy ideas – ideas that our members have worked tirelessly in support of – now occupy the political mainstream. Our arguments for investing in trains, developed by this Association over the past decade, were coming out of the mouths of Senators of all political stripes, representing Red States and Blue States alike.

## GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP MAIL-IN FORM

Rail Passengers Association membership is a truly distinctive, meaningful present that lasts all year long. Share your love for the Association with your family, friends and colleagues by giving them the gift of Rail Passengers membership. It is the ideal holiday or special occasion gift!

**You can mail your Give the Gift of Membership form directly to the office.  
Please use the following form and mail to:**

**Rail Passengers Association**, Attention: Gift of Membership/Kim Williams  
1200 G Street NW, Suite 240, Washington, DC 20005

### Remember to:

- Make your check payable to the Rail Passengers Association
- Sign your check
- Include the credit card expiration date **AND** CVV number

**\*\*\*Note:** To receive a tax receipt for 2019 purposes, your gift **MUST** be postmarked no later than December 31, 2019.

### RECIPIENT'S INFORMATION

Salutation: (circle one) Mr / Ms / Mrs / Miss / Dr

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) Home / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Type of Membership: (Please Check One)

- Individual (\$60),  Senior (\$50),  Family (\$80),  Sustaining (\$125),  
 Advocate Bronze (\$160),  Advocate Silver (\$290),  Advocate Gold (\$550),  
 Silver Rail Society (\$1000),  Silver Rail Society PLUS (\$2500)

### GIVER'S INFORMATION

Salutation: (circle one) Mr / Ms / Mrs / Miss / Dr

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) Home / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### GIFT INFORMATION

Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type (circle one): Check/Money Order / Visa / MasterCard / American Express / Discover

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date (MM/YY): \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_

(NOTE: Without an accurate expiration date and CVV we will not be able to process your donation.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Go to <https://www.railpassengers.org/members/member-benefits/> to see the full list of membership benefits.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR RAIL PASSENGER MEMBER BENEFITS

- Access to travel and ticket discounts through MemberDeals
- Save 10% on most Amtrak rail fares
- VSP Individual Vision Care insurance plans
- Save 20% on all Adventure Class fares on Alaska Railroad trains
- 20% off on a round-trip ticket on the Grand Canyon Railway
- 25% off of car rentals at Avis.
- And more



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1200 G Street, NW, Suite 240  
Washington, DC 2005-3818  
202-408-8362 | 202-408-8287 (fax)  
[www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org) | [narp@narprail.org](mailto:narp@narprail.org)