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U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg Highlights Biden Administration's Support for Transportation Workers and Additional COVID-19 Relief Funding

Meets with leaders from Amtrak, and local transit agencies, as well as front line transit and rail workers at Union Station

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg met with Amtrak and transit officials as well as front line transit and rail workers at Union Station, where he discussed the importance of the recently announced federal mask requirements for public transportation employees and users to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 and highlighted the Biden Administration's support for additional COVID-19 relief funding for public transportation.

"We depend on many essential workers for our economy and for our way of life. And while many Americans are wrestling with the complexities of working from home, many other Americans don't have the opportunity, or the option, to work from home, and they are supported by these extraordinary workers who look after the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of American travel," said Buttigieg. "Above all, I want to say thank you to all of the workers and leadership who have facilitated essential trips, and have delivered essential goods and services during the pandemic, and for their dedication to the safety and prosperity of this country and the traveling public."

Secretary Buttigieg emphasized that the health and safety of the American public is the Biden Administration's number-one priority. Mask-wearing, physical distancing, appropriate ventilation, and timely testing can reduce the risk of travelers spreading COVID-19.

One of President Biden's first actions to protect the health and safety of Americans was to sign an Executive Order on January 21 promoting safety during the COVID-19 public health emergency in domestic and international travel. On January 29, the CDC issued an order requiring masks to be worn throughout the nation's transportation networks, stating that all transit passengers and workers must wear masks on transit vehicles and in transit facilities. On January 31, the TSA issued a security directive implementing the order, stating that it applies to passenger railroads, intercity bus services, and public transportation. The mask requirement will save lives by helping to control the transmission of COVID-19.

In addition to helping to save lives, the Biden Administration is working to support the nation's transportation systems that have been hit hard by COVID-19. Secretary Buttigieg underscored that dependable public transit systems are critical for a robust and equitable economy recovery. The American Rescue Plan would help keep agencies from having to lay off transit workers and cutting the routes that essential workers rely on every day, while making these transit systems more resilient and ensuring that communities across the country maintain the access to opportunity that public transportation provides.

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