

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEES:

AGING

ARMED SERVICES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

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>

March 20, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I understand that you have initiated multiple efforts to improve the safety, reliability and fiscal viability of Amtrak. However, I am deeply troubled to learn that Amtrak is ending benefits specifically provided to a number of groups, including veterans, for using Amtrak. This is inexcusable. I urge you to cease these efforts and reaffirm that veterans will always be welcomed and encouraged to use the nation's railroad with a discount program that recognizes and rewards their service to our country.

As you know, Amtrak provides discounts to veterans and their immediate family members. For 17 years, these benefits have been administered through Veterans Advantage, an entity that facilitates benefits and discounts for veterans. In 2013, I became aware that these benefits were less robust than benefits for other groups such as AAA and seniors. At that time, veterans were unable to receive a discount on tickets purchased within three days of travel and were forbidden from applying their discount to immediate family members. I wrote to your predecessor demanding a change. In July 2014, Amtrak acted accordingly, working with Veterans Advantage to expand the discount for veterans to include purchases made within three days of travel and allowing veterans to apply the benefit to immediate family members.

I have recently learned that Amtrak is now planning to effectively eliminate all discounts for veterans, including those I fought to achieve. I urge you to continue to honor veterans with discounts and re-instate your partnership with an organization like Veterans Advantage to ensure veterans and their families have access to all the discounts they are due. These benefits are a small token of appreciation to veterans who have committed their lives to protecting our nation and help preserve a strong customer base for Amtrak.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate