

# special employee advisory

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## Congress Passes Amtrak Appropriations for FY 2010

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Amtrak's FY 2010 Appropriations bill has been approved by Congress and is expected to be signed by the president as early as today. The Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010 contains \$1.565 billion in federal support for Amtrak, comprising \$563 million for operating, \$594 million for capital, \$264 million for debt service, and \$144 million to be used for ADA compliance.

While it is the highest appropriation in Amtrak history, it falls short of the \$1.8 billion that was authorized by Congress in the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act and what was subsequently requested by Amtrak in February 2009.

The bill also contains a provision that requires Amtrak to implement the procedures necessary to provide storage and carriage of firearms in checked baggage cars and at Amtrak stations that accept checked baggage, within one year of the bill's enactment. Amtrak's current policy prohibits all firearms, ammunition and other weapons aboard its trains. This includes any being carried on the person, in carry-on baggage or in checked baggage, and applies regardless of whether a passenger has a permit to carry a firearm or weapon.

The current policy remains in effect until it is announced that Amtrak will begin accepting firearms in checked baggage, as required by December 2010. Given the media coverage on this issue and the potential for confusion, guidance to front line employees is being issued this week. Further information will be provided as developments occur.

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