

May 20, 2014
M14-011

To: SPEEA Council Members
From: SPEEA Legislative and Public Affairs Committee
Subject: **PRE-SUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS: Support for S.1393 / H.R. 1505 Holocaust Rail Justice Act.**

Background

This motion is a social issue motion.

To learn more about SNCF's role in the Holocaust and the efforts to seek justice for its victims, please visit www.holocaustrailvictims.org.

This is the story of Leo Bretholz, He grew up in Vienna, where he lived until the German annexation of Austria in 1938. For seven years thereafter, He ran from the Nazis. In October 1942, He was put in an internment camp outside of Paris—a waiting room for trains bound for the death camp at Auschwitz. He was there for only two weeks before the order came to gather his belongings for his deportation.

His deportation train to Auschwitz was owned and operated by SNCF, a company which still exists today. And despite the fact that SNCF has refused to pay reparations in the roughly 70 years since its first deportation train ran during the Holocaust, this company is now looking to expand its business in the United States, with projects funded by tax dollars. It is time for SNCF to be held accountable for its active role in the Holocaust. It is simply unconscionable that SNCF's American subsidiary is now competing to build and operate the light-rail Purple Line in his home state of Maryland – valued at more than \$6 billion and one of the single biggest contracts in state history – while refusing to be held accountable.

SNCF willingly collaborated with the Nazis. They were paid by the Nazis per head and per kilometer to transport innocent victims across France and ultimately toward death camps like Auschwitz and Buchenwald. In the end, SNCF transported 76,000 Jews and thousands of others, including U.S. pilots shot down over France, toward the death camps. This included over 11,000 children. Of the 76,000 Jews deported on SNCF trains, only 2,000 would survive.

SNCF has gone so far as to tell a member of the California Assembly that "SNCF will never pay the survivors anything." Instead, the company has spent millions of dollars on a lobbying and public relations campaign to rewrite history and avoid accountability for its pivotal role in one of history's greatest atrocities. SNCF did not even publicly apologize for its role in the Holocaust until three years ago, not coincidentally at the very same time that SNCF was pursuing lucrative high-speed rail contracts in the United States.

He asks for help to hold SNCF accountable and support justice for himself and hundreds of similarly-situated Holocaust survivors. This means demanding that SNCF finally pay reparations and also reaching out to your Senators and Congressmen and asking them to support to Holocaust Rail Justice Act (S. 1393 / H.R. 1505).

End of his story.

Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (SNCF) owns 70 percent of Keolis, part of one of the four private consortiums recently chosen by the Maryland Department of Transportation to bid on a Purple Line public-private partnership.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/keolis-bid-on-purple-line-draws-scrutiny-for-parent-firms-holocaust-history/2014/01/19/3c39ed6e-7961-11e3-8963-b4b654bcc9b2_story.html

<http://www.keolisamerica.com/pages/about.html>

<http://www.keolis.com/en/business-activities/keolis-by-country/united-states.html>

Passage or adoption of SPEEA legislative or public issues requires a published ballot with a simple majority of seated Council Representatives casting an affirmative vote at a duly constituted SPEEA Council meeting.

Suburban rail

Keolis Rail Services America is the operator of Virginia Rail Express (VRE), a commuter rail service which transports passengers to Union Station in Washington DC from the state of Virginia, to the south. Keolis was preferred to the national rail operator Amtrak during this bid. Operations commenced on July, 12, 2010.

Bus and coach services

In November 2011, Keolis America Inc., Keolis' subsidiary in the United States, purchased Tectrans, a public transit operator headquartered in California, which later became Keolis Transit America (KTA).

Keolis Transit America provides a full spectrum of transportation services including operation of fixed-route transportation systems, paratransit and airport shuttle operations, fleet management and maintenance, and logistics and routing services.

Keolis operates transit operations in the following:

- California: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Long Beach, Van Nuys, Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena, Lancaster, Anaheim, Monrovia, Martinez, Pomona, Merced County and South Lake Tahoe.
- Florida: Miami, Fort Lauderdale, South Florida, Pompano Beach, Margate, Naples, and Collier County.
- Nevada: Las Vegas.
- Virginia: Richmond and Northern VA.

S. 1393

[http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/1393?q={%22search%22%3A\[%22S.+1393%22\]}](http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/1393?q={%22search%22%3A[%22S.+1393%22]})

Introduced 7/30/2013 by Sen. Charles Schumer, 13 cosponsors (Sen. Ron Wyden, Sen. Harry Reid, Sen. Marco Rubio)

H.R. 1505

[http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/1505/cosponsors?q={%22search%22:\[%22H.B.%201505%22\]}](http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/1505/cosponsors?q={%22search%22:[%22H.B.%201505%22]})

SPEEA L&PA Committee Recommendation

The SPEEA Legislative and Public Affairs Committee recommends' passage of this motion.

MOTION

It is moved that: The SPEEA Council supports passage of S 1393 / H.R. 1505, Holocaust Rail Justice Act.

Furthermore, the Council permits SPEEA staff & Members to advocate in favor of said measures.

Pro's

- If the legislation is passed it will help to pressure the American subsidiary to pay reparations like other companies have in order to bid on work in the USA, paid for by tax dollars.

Con's

- Could reduce competition for rail contracts in the USA.

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