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Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions
In 1971 when Congress in a bi-partisan basis, with Pres. Nixon's support, created what we euphemistically call Amtrak, railroads with three exceptions, joined enthusiastically. They were able to rid themselves of money-losing trains AND greatly reduce the number of passenger trains using their property.

(the 3 exceptions were Southern which was still making a profit on their passenger service, D&RGW which did NOT want to give preference to Amtrak trains and CRI&P which did not have sufficient funding to join due to being on the verge of bankruptcy). Yes, railroads happily agreed to give preference to a Amtrak trains. I know as I was riding trains pre-Amtrak on CB&Q, GN & NP (now BNSF), IC (now CN) and L&N (now CSX). I and my family continue to use Amtrak as a frequently superior choice relative to commercial air or our automobiles. Shortly after Amtrak began, returning from service in SE Asia, i began my Safety career with C&NW (now UP) railroad. I knew full well then and now, railroads WILLINGLY agreed to give preference to Amtrak trains. This was done voluntarily AND was in line with the history of the best-run railroads right up to Amtrak - first class trains (nearly all being 'passenger') were and are to be given priority over 'freight' trains. So, why is there even a question today? Whether you prefer train or air, public or private ownership, the irrefutable fact remains that the so-called 'freight' railroads to either directly or via their predecessors, gave Amtrak trains preference. Note too, the result was they saved millions & millions of dollars AND even in 2106, carry fewer trains over their trackage than they did in early 1971. The best railroads, then & now, such as BNSF, kept their passenger trains on schedule as evidence that they were/are 'well run', have high standards and can be trusted. So again, why is there any question? I happen to be a life-long conservative Republican but irrespective of politics, a legal agreement, freely entered into, is to be kept! That's part of the reason I enlisted in our Air Force in 1970 to give this country four years of my life - we are a nation of laws NOT be circumvented by a politician or businessman or union on a whim. The law is the law is the law. I just feel badly that Amtrak is now subject to railroads violating that agreement they made in 1971; especially CSX who I have personally experienced putting freight trains ahead of Amtrak's "Capital Limited" on multiple occasions. I.E. I know wherewith I speak as a former railroader with over a half century of passenger train experience.