____ CONGRESS
____ SESSION

H. R. ____

To dissolve the National Railroad Passenger Corporation and establish a tiered system of regionally chartered, competitively operated passenger rail corporations, to establish a unified interoperable fare system across all tiers of passenger rail, to provide a dynamic Federal funding formula for passenger rail operations and construction, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. _____ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To dissolve the National Railroad Passenger Corporation and establish a tiered system of regionally chartered, competitively operated passenger rail corporations, to establish a unified interoperable fare system across all tiers of passenger rail, to provide a dynamic Federal funding formula for passenger rail operations and construction, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE I—SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS; FINDINGS; DEFINITIONS

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE. This Act may be cited as the “American Passenger Rail Transport Act”.

SEC. 102. TABLE OF CONTENTS. The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

TITLE I—SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS; FINDINGS; DEFINITIONS
Sec. 101. Short title.
Sec. 102. Table of contents.
Sec. 103. Findings.
Sec. 104. Definitions.

TITLE II—DISSOLUTION OF AMTRAK
Sec. 201. Dissolution of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.
Sec. 202. Transfer of assets.
Sec. 203. Assumption of debt.
Sec. 204. Employee protections.
Sec. 205. Pension obligations.
Sec. 206. Continuity of service.
Sec. 207. Succession to access rights.
Sec. 208. Treatment of Amtrak stock.
Sec. 209. Successor in interest.

TITLE III—ESTABLISHMENT OF TIERED RAIL SYSTEM
Sec. 301. Three-tier system established.

TITLE IV—GENERAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL RAIL CORPORATIONS
Sec. 401. Chartering and auction.
Sec. 402. Bidder eligibility; cross-ownership limitation.
Sec. 403. Ownership timeline; mandatory public offering.
Sec. 404. Federal golden share.
Sec. 405. Prohibition on mergers.
Sec. 406. Interoperability agreements.
Sec. 407. Rail Interoperability Board established.

TITLE V—SHORT-DISTANCE METRO LINES
Sec. 501. Metro transit mandate.
Sec. 502. Privatization of existing public systems.
Sec. 503. Initial qualifying areas.
Sec. 504. Voluntary participation.

TITLE VI—MID-DISTANCE EXPRESS RAIL
Sec. 601. Regional express rail corporations established.
Sec. 602. Service standards.
Sec. 603. Interconnection requirement.

TITLE VII—LONG-DISTANCE HIGH-SPEED RAIL
Sec. 701. National high-speed rail coalition.
Sec. 702. Minimum coverage requirements.
Sec. 703. Construction standards and prioritization.

TITLE VIII—UNIFIED FARE SYSTEM
Sec. 801. Unified transport card.
Sec. 802. Accessibility standards.
Sec. 803. Unified trip-planning platform.

TITLE IX—FUNDING

Sec. 901. Operating assistance.
Sec. 902. Profitability determination.
Sec. 903. Reinvestment requirement.
Sec. 904. Infrastructure grants and loans.
Sec. 905. Oversight and enforcement.
Sec. 906. Authorization of appropriations.
TITLE X—MISCELLANEOUS
Sec. 1001. Severability.
Sec. 1002. Effective date.
Sec. 1003. Technical and conforming amendments.

SEC. 103. FINDINGS. Congress finds the following:

(1) Passenger rail service in the United States, outside of a limited number of dense corridors, provides no practical alternative to automobile or air travel for the great majority of intercity and metropolitan trips.

(2) The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (in this Act referred to as "Amtrak"), established by the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 (Public Law 91–518), operates predominantly over track owned by freight railroads. Although section 24308(c) of title 49, United States Code, grants intercity rail passenger transportation preference over freight transportation, that preference is inconsistently honored and difficult to enforce, resulting in chronic delay and limited service frequency.

(3) A single, nationally centralized operator lacks competitive incentive to improve service and lacks meaningful access to the private capital markets that fund infrastructure expansion by comparable private operators in other transportation sectors.

(4) Nations including France, Japan, and Germany have achieved significantly higher passenger rail ridership and reliability through a tiered system that separates local transit, regional express rail, and long-distance high-speed rail into distinct networks with distinct funding and equipment standards, while maintaining interoperable ticketing and transfers between tiers.

(5) A restructured national passenger rail system, organized around regionally accountable, competitively operated corporations and unified by common interoperability and fare standards, would better serve the traveling public than continuation of the existing single-operator model.

SEC. 104. DEFINITIONS. In this Act:

(1) BOARD.—The term "Board" means the Rail Interoperability Board established under section 407.

(2) EXPRESS RAIL CORPORATION.—The term "express rail corporation" means a rail corporation chartered under title VI to provide mid-distance express rail service within a region listed in section 601.

(3) HIGH-SPEED RAIL COALITION.—The term "high-speed rail coalition" means the national joint venture of express rail corporations established under section 701.

(4) LONG-DISTANCE ROUTE; NORTHEAST CORRIDOR.—The terms "long-distance route" and "Northeast Corridor" have the meanings given those terms in section 24102 of title 49, United States Code, as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) METRO CORPORATION.—The term "metro corporation" means a rail corporation chartered under title V to provide short-distance metro rail service within a qualifying metropolitan statistical area or

within a metropolitan statistical area for which an election has been made under section 504.

(6) QUALIFYING METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA.—The term "qualifying metropolitan statistical area" means a metropolitan statistical area, as most recently delineated by the Office of Management and Budget, with a population of not less than 1,500,000 according to the most recent annual population estimate published by the Bureau of the Census.

(7) RAIL CORPORATION.—The term "rail corporation" means a metro corporation or an express rail corporation chartered under this Act.

(8) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Transportation, acting through the Federal Railroad Administration unless otherwise specified.

(9) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States and the District of Columbia.

(10) TRANSPORT CARD.—The term "transport card" means the unified fare instrument established under section 801.

TITLE II—DISSOLUTION OF AMTRAK

SEC. 201. DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall complete the dissolution of Amtrak, in accordance with the transition plan submitted under subsection (c), not later than the date specified in subsection (d). Effective upon completion of the dissolution, part C of subtitle V of title 49, United States Code, is repealed.

(b) TRANSITION PERIOD.—During the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on the date of dissolution under subsection (d), Amtrak shall continue to operate its existing routes and schedules to the maximum extent practicable, except as necessary to facilitate the orderly transfer of assets, personnel, and service obligations under this title.

(c) TRANSITION PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with Amtrak's board of directors, shall submit to Congress a detailed transition plan and timeline governing the dissolution required by this section, including the allocation of assets required by section 202(a). Dissolution activities beyond the preparation of this plan may not commence until the transition plan has been submitted.

(d) DATE OF DISSOLUTION.—The dissolution required by subsection (a) shall be completed on the later of—

(1) the date that is 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) the date on which the Secretary certifies to Congress that each route described in section 206 is being operated by a rail corporation or the high-speed rail coalition.

SEC. 202. TRANSFER OF ASSETS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—All infrastructure, rolling stock, maintenance facilities, station assets, and real property owned or controlled by Amtrak shall be transferred, without consideration, to the rail corporation or corporations chartered under this Act to which the asset is allocated in the transition plan submitted under section 201(c). Each transfer shall take effect on the date on which the shares of the receiving rail corporation are sold under section 401(b).

(b) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), ownership of the Northeast Corridor right-of-way shall transfer jointly to the express rail corporation chartered for the Northeast region under section 601 and to the high-speed rail coalition established under section 701, reflecting the shared use of that corridor by both tiers. The Board shall establish, not later than 180 days after the date on which both the express rail corporation chartered for the Northeast region and the high-speed rail coalition have been established, an access and revenue-sharing agreement governing the joint ownership required by this subsection.

(c) DISPUTES.—Any dispute regarding the allocation of an asset under subsection (a) shall be resolved by the Board.

SEC. 203. ASSUMPTION OF DEBT. Any outstanding debt obligation of Amtrak as of the date of enactment of this Act shall be assumed by the Department of the Treasury and shall not be transferred to, or become the obligation of, any rail corporation chartered under this Act.

SEC. 204. EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS.

(a) HIRING PRIORITY.—Each rail corporation chartered under this Act shall extend a priority hiring right, for a period of not less than 2 years following the commencement of that corporation's operations, to individuals employed by Amtrak immediately before the date of enactment of this Act whose prior duties were principally performed within that corporation's geographic service area or on a route assumed by that corporation.

(b) COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS.—Collective bargaining agreements in effect between Amtrak and its employees as of the date of enactment of this Act shall remain in effect and shall bind the successor rail corporation employing the covered employees for not less than 4 years following the transfer of those employees, after which such agreements may be renegotiated in accordance with otherwise applicable Federal labor law.

SEC. 205. PENSION OBLIGATIONS. Retirement and pension obligations owed to current and former Amtrak employees under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231 et seq.) shall continue to be administered by the Railroad Retirement Board and shall remain fully backed by the Federal Government. No such obligation shall be transferred to, or assumed by, any rail corporation chartered under this Act.

SEC. 206. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE. A long-distance route operated by Amtrak as of the date of enactment of this Act shall continue to be operated under its existing schedule until the express rail corporation or high-speed rail coalition responsible for the corresponding route under this Act has commenced revenue service on that route, to prevent a lapse in service during the transition required by this title.

SEC. 207. SUCCESSION TO ACCESS RIGHTS. Effective on the date on which a rail corporation commences revenue service, section 24308 of title 49, United States Code, shall apply to that rail corporation, with respect to the intercity rail passenger transportation it provides, in the same manner as such section applied to Amtrak on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 208. TREATMENT OF AMTRAK STOCK. Upon dissolution of Amtrak, all outstanding common and preferred stock of Amtrak shall be canceled. Each holder of common stock shall be paid the fair market value of that stock, as determined by the Secretary, from amounts made available under section 906.

SEC. 209. SUCCESSOR IN INTEREST. Except as provided in sections 203 and 205, each rail corporation to which an asset is transferred under section 202 shall be the successor in interest to Amtrak with respect to each contract, lease, and agreement relating to that asset.

TITLE III—ESTABLISHMENT OF TIERED RAIL SYSTEM

SEC. 301. THREE-TIER SYSTEM ESTABLISHED. There is established, in place of the single-tier system formerly operated by Amtrak, a three-tier national passenger rail system consisting of—

(1) short-distance metro lines, chartered and regulated under title V, providing local transit within a single metropolitan area;

(2) mid-distance express rail, chartered and regulated under title VI, providing regional service of approximately 100 to 500 miles connecting metropolitan areas within a designated multi-State region; and

(3) long-distance high-speed rail, chartered and regulated under title VII, providing a national trunk network connecting the regional express rail networks described in title VI to one another.

Each tier shall be interoperable with the others through the unified transport card established under title VIII, such that a rider may transfer between tiers using a single transport card account, without opening a separate account with each operator.

TITLE IV—GENERAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL RAIL CORPORATIONS

SEC. 401. CHARTERING AND AUCTION.

(a) CHARTERING.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue a Federal charter establishing each metro corporation required under title V and each express rail corporation required under title VI.

(b) AUCTION.—Not later than 1 year after chartering a rail corporation under subsection (a), the Secretary shall sell, by public auction, all outstanding shares of the rail corporation, other than the share retained under section 404, to the qualified bidder submitting the highest bid. Proceeds of each auction shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

SEC. 402. BIDDER ELIGIBILITY; CROSS-OWNERSHIP LIMITATION.

(a) ELIGIBLE BIDDERS.—A bidder under section 401 may be an existing transportation company, an infrastructure investment firm, or a private individual, provided that the bidder meets minimum capitalization and safety-certification requirements established by the Secretary by rule not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) CROSS-OWNERSHIP LIMITATION.—No bidder, and no group of commonly controlled bidders, may hold a controlling interest in more than one metro corporation and one express rail corporation concurrently. The Board shall establish procedures to identify and prevent evasion of this limitation through intermediate holding entities.

SEC. 403. OWNERSHIP TIMELINE; MANDATORY PUBLIC OFFERING.

(a) PRIVATE HOLDING PERIOD.—A winning bidder under section 401 may hold the awarded rail corporation as a privately held entity for a period not to exceed 5 years following the date of the auction.

(b) MANDATORY INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING.—Not later than the end of the period described in subsection (a), the rail corporation shall complete an initial public offering of its shares, after which it shall continue to operate as a publicly traded, but independently and privately managed, corporation.

SEC. 404. FEDERAL GOLDEN SHARE. The Federal Government shall retain in each rail corporation chartered under this Act a single, non-controlling golden share, held by the Secretary and exercisable solely for the purpose of enforcing safety standards prescribed by the Secretary under chapter 201 of title 49, United States Code, and interoperability and transport card standards established by the Board. The Secretary, as holder of the golden share, may veto any amendment to the charter of the rail corporation that would impair compliance with such a standard, and may bring a civil action in a district court of the United States to enforce such a standard. The golden share shall not confer any right to participate in the day-to-day management of the corporation.

SEC. 405. PROHIBITION ON MERGERS. A rail corporation chartered under this Act may not merge with, or acquire a controlling interest in, another rail corporation chartered under this Act.

SEC. 406. INTEROPERABILITY AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each rail corporation chartered under this Act shall enter into binding interoperability agreements with adjoining and connecting rail corporations, governing, at a minimum—

(1) shared track access;

(2) through-ticketing consistent with title VIII; and

(3) common signaling standards established by the Board, consistent with safety standards prescribed by the Secretary under chapter 201 of title 49, United States Code.

(b) ANTITRUST.—An agreement entered into under this section and approved by the Board shall be exempt from the antitrust laws to the extent necessary to carry out the agreement.

SEC. 407. RAIL INTEROPERABILITY BOARD ESTABLISHED.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department of Transportation a Rail Interoperability Board.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—The Board shall be composed of 7 members appointed by the Secretary, of whom—

(A) 1 shall be the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, who shall serve as Chair; and

(B) 6 shall be individuals with expertise in rail operations, finance, or labor, none of whom may be an officer or employee of, or hold a financial interest in, a rail corporation.

(2) TERMS.—A member appointed under paragraph (1)(B) shall serve a term of 5 years, except that the Secretary shall stagger the initial terms so that not more than 2 terms expire in any year.

(3) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

(4) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The Board shall establish an advisory committee composed of 1 representative designated by each express rail corporation, which the Board shall consult before establishing any standard under this Act.

(c) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

(1) arbitrate disputes between rail corporations regarding track access, scheduling conflicts, and technical standards;

(2) establish and enforce minimum service frequency and interoperability standards;

(3) administer the transport card clearinghouse described in section 801;

(4) maintain the unified trip-planning platform described in section 803; and

(5) administer the funding formula and profitability determinations described in title IX.

TITLE V—SHORT-DISTANCE METRO LINES

SEC. 501. METRO TRANSIT MANDATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall charter, and conduct an auction under section 401 for, a metro corporation to provide rail transit service within each qualifying metropolitan statistical area.

(b) MINIMUM MODE.—The minimum acceptable mode of service under subsection (a) is light rail. A metro corporation may substitute heavy rail (including subway) or commuter rail service where such infrastructure already exists or where ridership projections approved by the Board justify the additional expense.

(c) UPDATING OF QUALIFYING AREAS.—The list of qualifying metropolitan statistical areas shall be updated automatically upon each publication by the Office of Management and Budget of revised metropolitan statistical area delineations, without further action by Congress.

SEC. 502. PRIVATIZATION OF EXISTING PUBLIC SYSTEMS.

(a) ELECTION TO PRIVATIZE.—A State, or political subdivision of a State, that owns or operates a metro rail system in a qualifying metropolitan statistical area may elect to transfer that system to a metro corporation chartered under section 401, in exchange for compensation determined under subsection (d). A metro rail system that is not transferred under this subsection shall not be eligible for funding under title IX.

(b) TRANSFERRED OBLIGATIONS.—Existing employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and accessibility commitments under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) associated with a system transferred under subsection (a) shall transfer to the successor metro corporation.

(c) FARE CONTINUITY.—Riders of a system transferred under subsection (a) shall retain the fare structure in effect immediately before the transfer until the transport card described in title VIII is implemented region-wide.

(d) COMPENSATION.—The compensation for a system transferred under subsection (a) shall be the fair market value of the system, as agreed by the Secretary and the transferring State or political subdivision, and shall be paid by the Secretary from amounts made available under section 906.

SEC. 503. INITIAL QUALIFYING AREAS. As of the date of enactment of this Act, the qualifying metropolitan statistical areas include the following:

Metropolitan Statistical Area
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX
Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL
San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA
Denver-Aurora-Centennial, CO
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC
St. Louis, MO-IL
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX
Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA
Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom, CA
Pittsburgh, PA
Las Vegas-Henderson-North Las Vegas, NV
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN
Kansas City, MO-KS
Columbus, OH
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN

Metropolitan Statistical Area
Cleveland-Elyria, OH
Indianapolis-Carmel-Greenwood, IN
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA
Virginia Beach-Chesapeake-Norfolk, VA-NC
Jacksonville, FL
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA
Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI
Raleigh-Cary, NC

SEC. 504. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. A State, or political subdivision of a State, located in a metropolitan statistical area that does not meet the population threshold described in section 104(6) may elect to have a metro corporation established for that area under this title, and upon such an election the area shall be eligible for the funding formula described in title IX on the same terms as a qualifying metropolitan statistical area.

TITLE VI—MID-DISTANCE EXPRESS RAIL

SEC. 601. REGIONAL EXPRESS RAIL CORPORATIONS ESTABLISHED. The Secretary shall charter one express rail corporation for each of the regions identified in the following table, covering the States listed for that region:

Region	Constituent States
Alaska	Alaska
Appalachia	Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Cascadia	Idaho, Oregon, Washington
Deep South	Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi
Great Lakes	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
Hawaii	Hawaii
Heartland	Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
Mountain West	Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming
New England	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
Northeast	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
South Central	Oklahoma, Texas
Southwest	Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico
Sun Belt	Florida, Georgia, South Carolina
Upper Midwest	Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin

SEC. 602. SERVICE STANDARDS.

(a) METRO CONNECTIVITY.—Each express rail corporation shall connect every qualifying metropolitan statistical area located within its region to not less than one express rail line. For purposes of this title, a qualifying metropolitan statistical area is located in the region containing the State in which its first-named principal city is located.

(b) FREQUENCY.—Each express rail corporation shall maintain minimum service frequency standards established by the Board.

(c) EQUIPMENT STANDARDS.—Express rail service shall be designed for average trip lengths of approximately 100 to 500 miles and shall use conventional or higher-speed equipment with a maximum operating speed of not more than 125 miles per hour, distinguishing such service from the high-speed equipment required under title VII.

SEC. 603. INTERCONNECTION REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), each pair of express rail corporations whose regions share a land border shall jointly construct not less than one direct connecting line between their networks, such that a rider may travel from the core of one regional network into the core of the adjacent regional network without a change in transportation mode.

(b) EXEMPTION FOR ALASKA AND HAWAII.—The express rail corporations for the Alaska region and the Hawaii region are exempt from the requirement of subsection (a), as neither region can be physically connected to the continental network by rail. Both shall otherwise operate as standalone express rail corporations eligible for the funding formula described in title IX on the same terms as other express rail corporations.

TITLE VII—LONG-DISTANCE HIGH-SPEED RAIL

SEC. 701. NATIONAL HIGH-SPEED RAIL COALITION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a single national high-speed rail coalition.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—Each express rail corporation chartered under title VI, other than the express rail corporation for the Hawaii region, shall automatically be a member of the high-speed rail coalition.

(c) GOVERNANCE.—The high-speed rail coalition shall be organized as a joint venture of its members, governed by a board composed of 1 representative of each member, under a charter approved by the Board.

SEC. 702. MINIMUM COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS. The high-speed rail coalition shall provide, at minimum—

(1) not less than one stop in every State other than Alaska and Hawaii;

(2) not less than one stop in each qualifying metropolitan statistical area; and

(3) direct or single-transfer service between the 10 largest metropolitan statistical areas in the United States by population.

SEC. 703. CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS AND PRIORITIZATION.

(a) STANDARDS.—High-speed rail infrastructure constructed under this title shall be built on largely grade-separated, electrified, dedicated right-of-way and shall be designed for a maximum operating speed of not less than 150 miles per hour and, where terrain and demand permit, not less than 220

miles per hour.

(b) PRIORITIZATION.—The high-speed rail coalition shall prioritize construction of corridors with the highest existing air-travel passenger volume, as determined by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, before construction of lower-volume corridors.

(c) EXISTING LAW UNCHANGED.—Nothing in this title modifies existing Federal law governing eminent domain, environmental review, right-of-way acquisition, or the authority of the Surface Transportation Board over the construction of rail lines.

TITLE VIII—UNIFIED FARE SYSTEM

SEC. 801. UNIFIED TRANSPORT CARD.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Board shall establish a single, contactless transport card usable by a rider to access any metro corporation or express rail corporation service in the United States without a separate account or ticket for each operator.

(b) HIGH-SPEED RESERVATIONS.—High-speed rail tickets, which require seat reservations, shall be purchased in advance through an account tied to the transport card, whether by internet, mobile application, or station kiosk.

(c) CLEARINGHOUSE.—The Board shall operate a clearinghouse that reconciles and distributes fare revenue collected through the transport card among rail corporations based on the segments actually traveled by each rider.

(d) VOLUNTARY INTEGRATION.—Local bus systems, subway systems not otherwise covered by this Act, and other regional transit agencies are encouraged, but not required, to integrate with the transport card.

SEC. 802. ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS. The transport card system shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), and shall provide for cash-loadable kiosks at every station to accommodate riders without smartphones or bank accounts.

SEC. 803. UNIFIED TRIP-PLANNING PLATFORM. The Board shall maintain a single, nationally standardized digital application and website, independent of any individual rail corporation, providing trip planning, real-time schedules, and fare information across all three tiers established under title III.

TITLE IX—FUNDING

SEC. 901. OPERATING ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available under section 906, the Secretary shall make an annual grant to each rail corporation in an amount equal to one-third of the eligible operating expenses of the rail corporation for the preceding fiscal year. The remaining two-thirds shall be covered by fare revenue and any commercial revenue generated by the corporation, including station retail and advertising revenue.

(b) ELIGIBLE OPERATING EXPENSES.—The Board shall define eligible operating expenses by rule, consistent with generally accepted accounting principles, and such expenses shall not include depreciation, debt service, or compensation of any officer in excess of a limit established by the Board.

SEC. 902. PROFITABILITY DETERMINATION. A rail corporation shall be considered profitable for purposes of this title once its non-Federal revenue exceeds its total operating expenses over a rolling 3-year average, as verified by an independent audit submitted to the Board.

SEC. 903. REINVESTMENT REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon a determination of profitability under section 902, the grant required by section 901 shall continue, but shall be reinvested directly into that corporation's infrastructure and service improvements rather than distributed as profit, until the corporation is granted an exemption under subsection (b).

(b) EXEMPTION.—The Board may grant an exemption under subsection (a), upon petition of the corporation's board of directors, only if the rail corporation has been profitable under section 902 for not fewer than 3 consecutive years and meets each standard under section 905(a). Upon the grant of an exemption, payments to the rail corporation under section 901 shall terminate.

SEC. 904. INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS AND LOANS. Construction of new rail lines, as distinguished from ongoing operating expenses, shall be funded through a Federal infrastructure grant program and low-interest Federal loans administered by the Secretary, structured substantially in the manner of the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program under chapter 224 of title 49, United States Code, rather than through the formula described in section 901.

SEC. 905. OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT.

(a) CONDITIONS ON FUNDING.—Federal funding under this title is contingent on a rail corporation meeting minimum safety, accessibility, and on-time performance standards established by the Secretary and the Board.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—A rail corporation that persistently fails to meet the standards described in subsection (a) shall be subject to—

(1) reduction of Federal funding under this title; and

(2) in the most severe or repeated cases, revocation of its operating charter and re-auction of the corresponding network under section 401.

(c) REVOCATION.—Upon revocation of a charter under subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall appoint a receiver, who shall sell the operating assets of the rail corporation by public auction and distribute the proceeds first to creditors and then to shareholders.

SEC. 906. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act $____ for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031, to remain available until expended.

TITLE X—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 1001. SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this Act, or the application of a provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of the remaining provisions to any other person or circumstance, shall not be affected.

SEC. 1002. EFFECTIVE DATE. Except as otherwise provided, this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 1003. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS. Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a legislative proposal containing technical and conforming amendments to title 49, United States Code, and other provisions of law, necessary to reflect the dissolution of Amtrak and the establishment of rail corporations under this Act.