

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 57th Legislature (2020)

HOUSE

RESOLUTION 1036

By: Luttrell, Pfeiffer and Mize

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution relating to passenger rail service; expressing support for the extension of Amtrak service between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Newton, Kansas; expressing support for a multistate partnership between Amtrak and the states through which service operates; urging the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation to take certain action; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, numerous studies conducted by universities in Texas and Kansas have determined the economic benefit of Amtrak's Heartland Flyer passenger rail service and its extension to be at least three to one for every dollar spent; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has approached the State of Oklahoma to enter into a multioperational partnership for an extended Heartland Flyer, with connecting service between Amtrak's Southwest Chief and Texas Eagle; and

1 WHEREAS, ridership on the Heartland Flyer extension from
2 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Newton, Kansas, is anticipated to double
3 if connected with the Southwest Chief in Newton, Kansas; and

4 WHEREAS, fully funded maintenance of the Southwest Chief is an
5 integral and vital component of the Heartland Flyer extension; and

6 WHEREAS, The COVID-19 Virus state of emergency and steps taken
7 to battle the virus have highlighted our need for safer travel
8 options to enable residents in small cities to reach needed medical
9 centers and to provide methods of travel to the many travelers who
10 can no longer travel in airplanes due to their medical situations;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, the Kansas Department of Transportation has been the
13 recipient of several federal Transportation Investment Generating
14 Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants that have improved the Southwest
15 Chief tracks. The Southwest Chief serves several communities in the
16 state of Kansas and laid the groundwork for the planning and
17 development of expanded passenger rail services; and

18 WHEREAS, the Kansas House and Senate have passed the new
19 Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program, which includes money for
20 the operational expenses of the Heartland Flyer extension from
21 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Newton, Kansas; and

22 WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Kansas has proposed to
23 dedicate funds in the Kansas state budget for preliminary work for
24 the development of additional passenger rail service; and

1 WHEREAS, one of the primary responsibilities of state government
2 is to plan for the immediate and long-term transportation needs of
3 the state; and

4 WHEREAS, passenger rail service generates economic and
5 environmental benefits throughout the state and region; and

6 WHEREAS, while extensive capital expenditures are necessary for
7 the restoration of rail services between Newton, Kansas, and
8 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the federal government will likely
9 reauthorize funding for the Fixing America's Surface Transportation
10 (FAST) Act; and

11 WHEREAS, Amtrak has presented to the 2020 Committee on Ways and
12 Means of the Kansas Senate a plan to request one hundred percent
13 (100%) in federal funding for the passenger rail development of the
14 Heartland Flyer extension through reauthorization.

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
16 OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 57TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

17 THAT the House of Representatives supports and endorses the
18 extension of Amtrak service between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and
19 Newton, Kansas.

20 THAT the House of Representatives supports a multistate
21 partnership between Amtrak and the states through which the service
22 will operate.

1 THAT the House of Representatives urges the Oklahoma
2 Congressional Delegation to support the inclusion of federal funding
3 for the full implementation and development of the Heartland Flyer
4 extension from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Newton, Kansas, in the
5 upcoming reauthorization.

6 THAT the House of Representative urges the Oklahoma
7 Congressional Delegation to support the inclusion of full federal
8 funding for the maintenance of the Southwest Chief in the upcoming
9 reauthorization.

10 THAT enrolled copies of this resolution be dispatched by the
11 Clerk of the Oklahoma House of Representatives to each member of the
12 Oklahoma Congressional Delegation and to the Secretary of the United
13 States Department of Transportation.

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15 57-2-11737 SD 05/05/20
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