

It's imperative that mass transportation in our country be safe and secure. Congress must take appropriate action to achieve these goals. Our nation's railroads are an area of particular concern.

The alarming number of train accidents and incidents across the country in recent years, particularly in the San Antonio area, clearly demonstrate the need for federally mandated rail safety provisions and standards. While we have seen some progress in recent years towards improving the level of safety with which our nation's rail system operates, much remains to be done in order to ensure that the number of railroad accidents and incidents are minimized.

During the 110th Congress, we passed the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2008. The field hearings held across the country, including in San Antonio, by the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials prior to the bill's passage helped to ensure that it would comprehensively address national rail safety concerns. Provisions of the bill specifically address human error and fatigue, two factors that were identified at the San Antonio field hearing as significant threats to rail safety. Appropriately, the bill requires the implementation of positive train controls, technology that will help curtail human operator error.

As the residents of Bexar County know, we must act now to address problems on America's railroads. I am committed to a comprehensive plan for rail safety and will continue to work hard on this issue until we're left with a national rail system that is safe and secure.