

## HR 554

### Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2001

**Congress:** 107 (2001–2003, Ended)

**Chamber:** House

**Policy Area:** Transportation and Public Works

**Introduced:** Feb 12, 2001

**Current Status:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (Feb 14, 2001)

**Latest Action:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (Feb 14, 2001)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/554>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Rep. Young, Don [R-AK-At Large]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** AK • **Chamber:** House

### Cosponsors (3 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Clement, Bob [D-TN-5]	D · TN		Feb 12, 2001
Rep. Oberstar, James L. [D-MN-8]	D · MN		Feb 12, 2001
Rep. Quinn, Jack [R-NY-30]	R · NY		Feb 12, 2001

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Referred To	Feb 14, 2001
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee	House	Referred To	Feb 12, 2001

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Transportation and Public Works

### Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
107 HRES 36	Procedurally related	Feb 14, 2001: Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

## **Summary** (as of Feb 14, 2001)

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Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2001 - Amends Federal transportation law to require the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, as soon as practicable after being notified of a rail passenger accident involving a major loss of life, to: (1) designate and publicize the name and phone number of a Board employee who shall be a director of family support services responsible for acting as a point of contact within the Federal Government for the families of passengers involved in a rail passenger accident, and a liaison between the rail passenger carrier and the families; and (2) designate an independent nonprofit organization (with experience in disasters and post-trauma communication with families) which shall have primary responsibility for coordinating the emotional care and support of the families of passengers involved in such accidents.

Declares it shall be the responsibility of the director of family support services to request, as soon as practicable, from the rail passenger carrier involved in an accident a list of the names of the passengers who were aboard the carrier's train. Authorizes a designated organization also to request such list from such carrier. Prohibits the director of family support services and a designated organization from releasing list information to any person, except that information about a passenger may be provided to the passenger's family to the extent considered appropriate by the director or organization. Requires the Board, in the course of its investigation of an accident, to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the families of passengers involved in the accident are: (1) briefed, prior to any public briefing about the accident and any other findings from the investigation; and (2) individually informed of and allowed to attend any public hearings and meetings of the Board about such accident.

Prohibits: (1) a person (including a State or political subdivision) from impeding the ability of the Board (including the director of family support services) or the designated organization to carry out its responsibilities under this Act, or the ability of the families of passengers involved in an accident to have contact with one another; (2) unsolicited communication concerning a potential action for personal injury or wrongful death to be made by an attorney or any potential party to the litigation to an individual (other than an employee of the rail passenger carrier) injured in an accident, or to a relative of an individual involved in such accident, before the 45th day following the date of the accident; and (3) a State or political subdivision from preventing the employees, agents, or volunteers of an organization from providing mental health and counseling services in the 30-day period beginning on the date of an accident.

Directs each rail passenger carrier to submit to the Secretary of Transportation and the Chairman of the Board a plan for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in a rail passenger accident resulting in a major loss of life. Shields a rail passenger carrier from liability for damages (except for gross negligence or intentional misconduct) in any action brought in a Federal or State court arising out of the carrier's performance in preparing or providing a passenger list, or in providing information concerning a train reservation, pursuant to the carrier's plan.

## Actions Timeline

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- **Feb 14, 2001:** Rule H. Res. 36 passed House.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Considered under the provisions of rule H. Res. 36. (consideration: CR H330-334)
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Rule provides for consideration of H.R. 554 with 1 hour of general debate. Previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervening motions except motion to recommit with or without instructions. Measure will be read by section. Bill is open to amendments.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union pursuant to H. Res. 36 and Rule XXIII.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** The Speaker designated the Honorable Jo Ann Emerson to act as Chairwoman of the Committee.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** GENERAL DEBATE - The Committee of the Whole proceeded with one hour of general debate on H.R. 554.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** The House rose from the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union to report H.R. 554.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** The previous question was ordered pursuant to the rule.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** UNFINISHED BUSINESS - The Chair put the question on final passage and by voice vote, announced that the ayes had prevailed. Mr. Quinn demanded the yeas and nays and the Chair postponed further proceedings on the question of passage until later in the legislative day.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Considered as unfinished business. (consideration: CR H348-349)
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Passed/agreed to in House: On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 404 - 4 (Roll no. 15). (text: CR H333-334)
- **Feb 14, 2001:** On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 404 - 4 (Roll no. 15). (text: CR H333-334)
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Feb 14, 2001:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
- **Feb 13, 2001:** Rules Committee Resolution H. Res. 36 Reported to House. Rule provides for consideration of H.R. 554 with 1 hour of general debate. Previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervening motions except motion to recommit with or without instructions. Measure will be read by section. Bill is open to amendments.
- **Feb 12, 2001:** Introduced in House
- **Feb 12, 2001:** Introduced in House
- **Feb 12, 2001:** Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.