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OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
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VETERANS' AFFAIRS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 22, 2008

Joseph H. Boardman, Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Boardman,

I urge you to investigate the safety of the operation of railroad crossings in Middletown, Ohio.

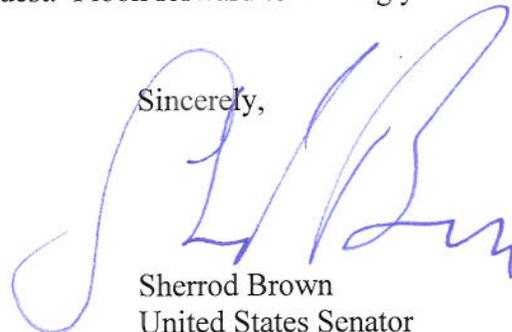
Recent media reports, which are confirmed by local government officials, have revealed dangerous conditions at railroad crossings in the city, which is home to over 50,000 residents. Two of these residents, Teri Viars and her daughter Christina Mason, lost their lives earlier this month when the vehicle they were driving was struck by a Norfolk Southern train.

While the cause of this accident will be established by the investigation now underway, Middletown residents have known for some time that many of the city's thirty railroad crossings are unsafe. Reports of deteriorating railroad crossings were brought to my attention in June. Throughout the summer, my office was in communication with Norfolk Southern and CSX to urge inspection of the crossings and make repairs as necessary. It appears those efforts have fallen short based on accounts of continued problems with barrier gates.

It is unacceptable that safety equipment at railroad crossings be maintained at anything less than a fully functional level. Railroads are required to conduct safety inspections every 30 days and report their findings to the Federal Railroad Administration. I hope you will determine whether these reports have accurately reflected the condition of the safety equipment in Middletown and prompted corrective action where warranted.

In advance, I appreciate your attention to this request. I look forward to hearing your findings soon.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator