



A bold voice for transportation workers

CONGRESS MUST COMPLETE LONG OVERDUE FAA REAUTHORIZATION THIS YEAR

Over the last three years, Congress has been unable to complete work on a multi-year FAA Reauthorization bill and has had to pass a series of 15 short-term funding extensions. Regrettably, this has delayed vital investments in air traffic control modernization and airports, implementation of critical safety and other policy reforms, and urgently needed jobs. Congress must not adjourn for the fall elections without completing this legislation.

With the number of remaining legislative days limited, obstructionist tactics in the Senate have threatened and stalled this critical legislation. FedEx and its Senate allies have used procedural objections to block consideration of this bill. The anti-union giant is objecting to a bipartisan provision in the House FAA legislation that would require FedEx to fall under the same labor laws as its chief competitors including UPS which supports the measure. The provision eliminates FedEx's ability to game our labor laws at the expense of its competitors and to the detriment of its truck drivers and mechanics who want to form and join unions. If FedEx opposes the House provision it is free to advocate its views and enlist congressional support. But the U.S. Senate should not permit FedEx and its Congressional allies to sabotage an entire air safety and jobs bill.

The traveling public cannot afford another extension to next spring or later. Across the nation flight delays are chronic with 1 in 4 flights arriving or departing late in some airports. As the economy improves flight delays will only worsen. Meanwhile, airports are operating at capacity, runway incursions are on the rise and our air traffic control system is still using 50 year-old technology. FAA Reauthorization presents an opportunity to address these issues and a host of others.

TTD's Executive Committee has previously endorsed a robust safety agenda for FAA Reauthorization. We renew our call for Congress to address outstanding safety issues as it works toward completion of this legislation. Biannual inspections of FAA-certificated foreign repair stations and drug and alcohol testing of foreign mechanics working on U.S. aircraft must be required. Legislators must direct the FAA to finally adopt occupational safety and health standards for flight attendants; mandate installation of cabin air cleaning technology on board aircraft; revise and strengthen airport rescue and firefighting standards; and improve safety for helicopter emergency medical services operators.

In addition to numerous safety reforms, FAA Reauthorization presents an opportunity to resolve critical collective bargaining issues for FAA employees. In April 2009, President Obama moved swiftly and appointed a team of mediators to help resolve a contract dispute between the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) and the FAA. While that bargaining

dispute is resolved, it was a product of failed policies that were used by the Bush FAA to impose pay and work rules on its employees. Now Congress must finish the job by enacting a provision that reforms the bargaining system and stops future contracts from being imposed on FAA employees.

This bill also presents an opportunity for the FAA to address staffing issues within its air traffic controller, technician, and safety inspector work groups. Simply put, present staffing levels are inadequate to meet growing industry demands and to ensure the safety of the aviation system.

FAA Reauthorization is also a jobs creator. Enactment of an FAA bill will put 300,000 people back to work at a time when the national jobless rate is still too high and job security for many families is perilous at best. Increased investments in our airports and infrastructure along with the modernization of our air traffic control system will create needed aviation, construction and technology jobs.

The aviation system plays a critical role in our national economy. It employs millions of workers both directly and indirectly, it generates nearly \$900 billion in economic activity annually and represents 9 percent of our GDP. The FAA forecasts that by 2021 passenger traffic will increase 49 percent to 1.16 billion passengers each year. We cannot continue to short-change and underfund the system yet expect that it will be able to meet projected demands. The health and vitality of this sector of our economy is critical and final passage of FAA Reauthorization will go a long way toward ensuring its success.

As we near the end of the 111th Congress, time is of the essence. The House and Senate have nearly reconciled their bills and are close to the finish line. Congress must not allow obstructionist tactics to derail an air safety and jobs bill. Transportation labor strongly urges the House and Senate to pass an FAA Reauthorization bill, including transportation labor priorities, before adjournment.

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