



September 19, 2007

***FAA Reauthorization:
Support Fairness in FAA Labor-Management Relations***

Dear Representative:

On behalf of transportation labor, I urge you to support the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (HR 2881) which restores a fair collective bargaining process for FAA employees.

When the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee marked-up the FAA bill, it adopted an amendment by Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Costello to restore fairness to the collective bargaining system that governs labor-management relations at the FAA. The amendment passed by a vote of 53-16 with nearly half of the Republicans on the Committee voting for it. Since then, the morale of the FAA workforce and the controller staffing crisis has gone from bad to worse. The GAO and IG have both reported that the imposed work rules have aggravated the situation and accelerated retirements by veteran controllers at a time when the system needs them most.

As a reminder, last year, despite loud bipartisan protests from Congress, the FAA ignored its obligation to bargain fairly with its employees and chose to unilaterally impose terms and conditions on its air traffic controllers without their consent or ratification. If this provision is not changed, the agency will simply refuse to bargain in good faith with all of its unions, impose terms and conditions as it sees fit, and in the process continue to put Congress in the middle of labor-management disputes. With that as a backdrop, last year 271 Members of the House voted for a free-standing bill to reject the agency's conduct and to impose a fair and balanced system of bargaining, mediation and binding arbitration.

Some opponents of restoring a fair collective bargaining process at the FAA cite the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates as a reason to vote against the bill. The fact is that the CBO estimate does not take into account that the transition to a less experienced controller workforce over the next five years – mainly due to the wave of controller retirements – means that the FAA could restore most of the pay cuts made in 2006, without increasing its total expense for controllers. When the expected controller retirement and attrition cost savings are taken into account, Section 601 of the bill is revenue neutral.

It is time to restore fairness to a badly broken bargaining system at the FAA. I urge you to support HR 2881 and reject any amendments or procedural motions to strike the collective bargaining language. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Baker at 202/628-9262.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", written over a horizontal line.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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