



June 6, 2006

**SUPPORT FAIRNESS FOR FAA WORKERS
VOTE YES ON H.R. 5449**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 31 member unions of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to vote yes on H.R. 5449, legislation introduced by Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-OH), when it is considered by the House under suspension of the rules. This bill would ensure that collective bargaining disputes between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and its unions are resolved fairly at the bargaining table or through procedures available to all other federal employees.

As you know, the FAA announced yesterday that it will unilaterally and without agreement impose a contract on its 14,500 controllers represented by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA). Not only is this maneuver subject to legal challenge, but is insulting that the FAA would take this step as the House prepares to debate and vote on legislation to send this bargaining matter back to the negotiating table where it belongs.

An overwhelming majority of the House is on record opposing the FAA's tactics and now it is time for Members on both sides of the aisle to honor their commitment by voting for H.R. 5449.

The fact is that the FAA never entered into serious or meaningful negotiations with NATCA – the agency always intended to simply impose its will on the controllers and unilaterally implement a contract. The traditional give-and-take that is common in real contract talks simply did not exist. The result of this one sided-process is a contract that would actually encourage thousands of experienced controllers to retire at a time when our aviation system can ill-afford making the well known staffing crisis even worse. Furthermore, the FAA's position on collective bargaining has created a significant level of distrust and acrimony among the agency's workers that is inconsistent with achieving aviation safety and efficiency.

The LaTourette bill would address these issues and do so in a fair and balanced manner. It would remove the controversial provision that the FAA is using to impose the contract and allow the parties to return to the table. Absent this change, the FAA will continue to involve Congress in future bargaining disputes and use its suspect interpretation of law to impose its will as it sees fit.

Opponents of this legislation have claimed that it will cost taxpayers \$1.9 billion and short-change other components of our aviation system. As an organization with a vested interest in a robust aviation and transportation budget, we find these arguments disingenuous and simply not based on the facts. The claims being made by opponents of H.R. 5449 ignore the fact that NATCA has already put a contract offer on the table with \$1.4 billion in savings.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President • Michael A. Ingrao, Secretary-Treasurer



More to the point, this bill does not appropriate nor authorize one cent of taxpayer money. Nor would it prejudice any of the parties or presuppose an outcome in the current NATCA dispute or any future contract negotiations.

The processes established in H.R. 5449 are fair, balanced and will serve the long-term needs of our aviation system. For these reasons I strongly urge you to vote yes on H.R. 5449.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President