



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Michael Buckley
202/628-9262
202/262-3854
MichaelB@ttd.org

FAA Once Again Delays Improving Oversight of Aircraft Repair *Bush Administration Continues to Ignore Key Deadlines*

Washington, D.C. – In yet another example of Bush appointees at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) siding with business interests over the needs of aviation safety, the FAA today delayed for an additional year requiring aircraft repair companies to have approved worker training programs. Edward Wytkind, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, termed it, "an inexcusable and dangerous move by an agency that is supposed to be protecting the flying public."

The FAA, which quietly slipped the delay into today's *Federal Register*, was supposed to begin enforcing the requirement in 2001. The agency granted itself the extension by meekly saying it had yet to finish its work, continuing a Bush administration defiance of calls to strengthen the oversight of aircraft repairs performed by outside contractors. Both the FAA and the Transportation Security Administration are still delinquent in meeting a 2004 congressionally-mandated deadline related to the security of overseas repair of aircraft used in America. The FAA today said public comment on the issue was "impracticable."

"This 'the dog ate my homework' excuse out of the FAA leadership is a complete abdication of their responsibility for aviation safety. The FAA continues to turn a blind eye toward outsourcing aircraft maintenance," Wytkind said.

In a growing trend that has been noted by the Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Transportation and several major media outlets, domestic airlines are increasingly contracting out their aircraft repairs. Northwest and Jet Blue, for example, send work to repair stations in places such as Singapore and El Salvador. While the FAA sanctions these facilities, federal oversight of the safety and security of this work is severely limited. AFL-CIO mechanics unions -- including the Transport Workers, Machinists, and Teamsters -- have been leading the effort to curb this dangerous practice since federal laws were weakened in 1988.

"Further delay is not an option. If the leaders at the FAA don't start getting serious about aircraft repair safety, Congress must force them to do so," Wytkind said.

TTD represents 35 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

888 16th Street, NW • Suite 650 • Washington, DC 20006 • tel: 202.628-9262 • fax: 202.628.0391 • www.ttd.org
Edward Wytkind, President • Michael A. Ingrao, Secretary-Treasurer

