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**CONTACT:** Michael Buckley  
202/628-9262  
202/262-3854  
[MichaelB@ttd.org](mailto:MichaelB@ttd.org)

## **Congress Must Pass Bipartisan Legislation Suspending Bush Plan to Permit Foreign Control of U.S. Airlines** *Oberstar-LoBiondo Bill Ensures Congressional Oversight of Impact on Airlines, Workers*

**Washington, D.C.** – AFL-CIO transportation unions called on Congress to pass legislation introduced today by Reps. Jim Oberstar (D-MN), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), and over 70 others, to suspend a Bush administration plan allowing foreign interests to control U.S. airlines.

“What was falsely marketed as a benign administrative change would actually make far-reaching changes in aviation policy that must be carefully reviewed by Congress before they are permitted to go into effect,” declared Edward Wytkind, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD). “This proposal has nothing to do with improving the state of our beleaguered airline industry and everything to do with our government placating the European Union in the rush to sign a new aviation services agreement.

“The Administration seems intent on pushing through major changes in rules governing foreign control of our airlines without so much as a single hearing or debate in Congress,” Wytkind said, citing the haste with which these regulatory changes were developed. “The Oberstar-LoBiondo bill retrieves this proposal, subjects it to rigid congressional review and oversight, and rightfully places the burden on this Administration to explain why this measure is good for the country.”

The Oberstar-LoBiondo bill, also co-sponsored by Transportation Committee Chairman Don Young (R-AK), would prevent the Administration from implementing these proposed changes for one year and require the Department of Transportation to report on the impact that changes would have on U.S. workers and our nation's economy and security.

“If the Administration thinks its proposal is good for the country it shouldn't fear congressional scrutiny in the light of day,” Wytkind added. “Our hard working members in the airline industry, already reeling from four disastrous years of lost jobs and pensions since the September 11 terrorist attacks, have no interest in seeing more jobs traded away at the negotiating table with foreign governments. Congress must do its part to protect the interests of American workers.”

The legislation is the latest reflection of bipartisan opposition to both the substance of the proposed changes as well the effort to circumvent the role of Congress. Eighty-five House members – including 22 Republicans – recently wrote the Bush administration asking that the rules not be finalized. Six U.S. Senators – including two Republicans – sent a similar letter.

“Airline workers across this country owe a debt of gratitude to Representatives Oberstar and LoBiondo for their leadership on this important issue,” Wytkind said, announcing that AFL-CIO transportation unions will begin mobilizing their members in support of the bill.

*TTD represents 29 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).*

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](http://www.ttd.org)  
Edward Wytkind, President • Michael A. Ingraio, Secretary-Treasurer