



OPPOSE THE DEMINT AMENDMENTS TO FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

May 16, 2007

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the millions of transportation workers represented by the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO's (TTD) 32 member unions, I write to ask you to vote against the DeMint amendments during today's mark-up of the FAA reauthorization bill (S. 1300). Senator DeMint has offered three amendments that would jeopardize this bill and threaten aviation safety.

We urge you to oppose the DeMint amendment which allows contracting out of the entire air traffic control system as well as the amendment to extend the contract tower program. The men and women who operate, maintain, inspect and certify our air traffic control system are the backbone of our aviation system. These workers perform critical safety jobs that must remain federal functions. The DeMint amendment would allow our air traffic control system to be sold to the lowest bidder. The facts are certain: privatization does not work. It has been tried around the globe and has been a dismal failure. Whether it is the insolvency of the British system, the steep increases in fees passed on to passengers in Canada or the chronic fatigue caused by short-staffing in the Australian system, the lesson is crystal clear: we should not privatize our air traffic system.

To add insult to injury, Senator DeMint wants to preserve a broken collective bargaining process that allows the FAA to impose contract terms on its employees and eschew established good-faith bargaining practices. Our nation's air traffic controllers, technicians and other employees work together to safely guide nearly 90,000 planes each day. These highly skilled men and women work tirelessly to ensure the safety of our nation's skies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The FAA and Congress must recognize the critical safety responsibilities of these employees and provide them with a fair collective bargaining process. The DeMint amendment prevents that process from moving forward.

Again, we urge you to oppose the three DeMint amendments during today's consideration of S. 1300. If you have any questions, please contact me directly or Elizabeth Baker at 202/628-9262.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", is located below the word "Sincerely,".

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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