

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Stalemates on FAA, Surface Transportation Bills Imperil the Economy, Undermine Safety

WASHINGTON, DC – *Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), issued the following statement following last night's Senate passage of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and surface transportation funding extensions that averted a partial shutdown of the FAA:*

“Last night the Senate averted another partial shut-down of the FAA by passing a funding extension for vital federal aviation and surface transportation programs. We congratulate Senators from both sides of the aisle for standing up to the obstructionist tactics of a single Senator and thank a bipartisan House for passing a clean extension of these vital safety and jobs programs. But it is a disgrace that Congress had to have this battle at all.

“For now, thousands of FAA employees and construction workers can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that their jobs and livelihoods will not be used as pawns in a dangerous game of chicken. Never again should these employees be sent home without paychecks simply because Washington is broken. And we will not relent in our insistence that the 4,000 furloughed FAA employees who were innocent victims of the partial shut-down in July receive back-pay for lost wages they are owed.

“It is a disgrace that Congress even had to pass a 22nd extension of FAA funding. Those who continue to hold hostage a multi-year aviation bill over an issue that has nothing to do with air safety or job creation are playing with fire. With each day that passes without congressional action on airport and air traffic control expansion and modernization, the safety of air travel is threatened and hundreds of thousands of jobs remain on the sidelines.

“It is also disappointing that Congress had to pass an 8th extension of surface transportation funding. It is time for our elected leaders to set aside partisan bickering and pass a multi-year surface transportation bill that begins to reverse decades of neglect of our infrastructure and in the process creates and sustains millions of jobs in transit, construction, rail, ports and other sectors. Rolling back these investments to reflect the transportation cuts in the Ryan Budget – and the 630,000 jobs it would destroy in year one – is a bad plan for a job-starved economy.

“In the weeks ahead we will mobilize to convince Congress that it is time to complete long-term reauthorizations that rebuild, expand and modernize our failing transportation system and put millions of Americans to work. At a time when our economy is burning with high unemployment, the last thing Americans need is more Washington gridlock and inaction.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, motor carrier, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.