



NEWS RELEASE

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The FAA Administrator Must Stop National Media Assault on Workers

Congress, DOT IG Must Demand Accounting of Tax Dollars Spent on 22-City Press Tour

Washington, D.C. . . . *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, in reaction to yesterday's launch by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of a national media blitz against its air traffic controllers.*

"At a time when the FAA is pleading poverty, it is absolutely outrageous that it has launched a 22-city press tour to malign its own workers. The tax-payer funded misinformation campaign coincides with the beginning of collective bargaining talks between the FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

"In the wake of this Administration's senseless proposal to slash the FAA's modernization budget, a 22-city press tour financed by the FAA is an egregious waste of scarce public resources. Congress and the Department of Transportation's Inspector General should demand an immediate and detailed account of what FAA Administrator Marion Blakey is spending to tarnish the work of the 14,500 men and women who perform this critical public safety role. It is conduct unbecoming of the nation's chief aviation safety regulator.

"The FAA's stewardship of air safety and air traffic control modernization has drawn sharp and repeated criticism from the Department of Transportation's Inspector General and the congressional watchdog agency. For example, a GAO study noted that nearly 7,500 controllers, or more than half the current workforce, would leave through retirement or attrition between 2002 and 2011. Yet last year the FAA only hired 13 new controllers. It is obvious that the FAA's expensive PR campaign is intended to deflect attention from its own failures by scapegoating the employees.

"Americans have grown accustomed to this behavior from anti-worker corporations like Wal-Mart. But we expect more out of our own government – and our tax dollars. Rather than denigrating its own employees, the FAA should work cooperatively with the nation's air traffic controllers to improve the safety and efficiency of the air traffic control system all of us rely upon."

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

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