



NEWS RELEASE

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Audit Shows FAA "Asleep at the Switch" As Airlines Outsource Aircraft Repairs AFL-CIO Transportation Unions Demand Greater Oversight

Washington, D.C. . . . *The following statement was issued today by Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), in response to an audit by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Inspector General of Federal Aviation Administration oversight of commercial aircraft maintenance.*

"The Department of Transportation Inspector General (IG) has unearthed yet more evidence that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been asleep at the switch in carrying out its duty to protect the flying public from the safety and security threats associated with the scourge of maintenance outsourcing by the nation's airlines.

"For almost two decades, TTD and its mechanics unions have waged a campaign to force our government to better ensure safety in an era when airlines increasingly outsource their maintenance. This work has been going to foreign repair facilities which, while certified by the FAA, do not comply with U.S. safety standards. In a post-9/11 world, outsourcing maintenance poses even more dangers.

"In 2003, the Inspector General warned of increasingly weak oversight of outsourced aircraft repair. And that same year Congress demanded one level of safety and security, regardless of where the maintenance was performed. Yet today's audit shows the FAA has done virtually nothing, other than its 2004 feel-good report that said it was "actively engaged" on the issue.

"The FAA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have also ignored a clear congressional measure -- enacted in the 2003 FAA reauthorization -- directing the agencies to issue new security regulations and specifically to perform audits of overseas facilities. Just as the FAA has ignored its mandate to protect the flying public from safety risks, it has demonstrated a blatant disregard for a congressional directive to work with DHS to ensure that aircraft flown by Americans are not maintained in foreign facilities that pose a security or terrorism threat.

"The latest report by the IG again points to an FAA that is totally out of touch with the realities of a U.S. aviation industry that has become over-reliant on a maze of contractors and subcontractors to perform safety and security-sensitive maintenance. To make matters worse, the FAA safety inspector workforce still remains dangerously under-staffed.

"It is time for the FAA Administrator to tell the truth about the risks associated with an outsourcing trend among airlines that is out of control, poorly monitored and regulated by our government, and on a collision course with the safety of the flying public. And it is time for the FAA Administrator to take a time out from issuing cooked reports that demonize her own employees and instead work with them to carry-out the FAA's core mission of protecting American travelers from safety and security risks."

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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