

September 19, 2007



***FAA Reauthorization:
Support the Poe Amendment to Protect Aircraft Safety***

Dear Representative:

When the House of Representatives considers the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (HR 2881), we urge you to support an amendment offered by Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) to extend drug and alcohol testing to maintenance work being performed on U.S. air carriers at foreign aircraft repair stations.

Under current rules, individual mechanics at U.S. carriers and at domestic repair stations are subject to drug and alcohol testing as a condition of working on U.S. aircraft. But the Federal Aviation Administration has refused to extend this most basic requirement to work done by mechanics at foreign stations working on U.S. aircraft. The Poe Amendment would reverse this double-standard and bring one level of safety to aircraft repair stations. It makes no sense to require U.S. mechanics, as safety-sensitive employees, to undergo various levels of drug and alcohol testing, if workers doing the exact same work – on the exact same aircraft – are exempt from this requirement simply because the station is located in another country. While some may argue that this requirement impedes the sovereignty of another country, we are not requiring that other nations change their own drug and alcohol testing requirements. Rather, if a station chooses to perform work on U.S. aircraft, that station simply must meet the same requirements as U.S. repair facilities.

Unfortunately, it is clear that the trend to outsource maintenance of U.S. aircraft is only increasing. Currently there are approximately 690 FAA-certified foreign repair stations, an increase of 345 percent since the rules governing foreign certification were eased in 1988. U.S. air carriers now outsource 64 percent of their maintenance work to both foreign and domestic stations. In 2006 alone, \$3.7 billion of the \$5.7 billion spent on maintenance – again both in this country and abroad was outsourced. With the vast amount of maintenance that is being done overseas, we must ensure that foreign stations are subject to an equivalent level of safety, oversight and quality control as U.S. stations.

The Poe amendment will ensure that all repair facilities working on U.S. aircraft, regardless of location, are subject to the same drug and alcohol testing requirements. On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) and specifically our aviation unions that represent mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, FAA inspectors, and aviation workers, I urge you to support this important amendment to protect aviation safety.

If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Baker at 202/628-9262.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", written over a horizontal line.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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