



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **AFL-CIO Airline Unions Support FAA Workers, Endorse Obama Bill Ensuring Fairness in Collective Bargaining**

**Washington, D.C.** -- Decrying a contentious approach to labor-management relations and a short-sighted emphasis on cost-savings over safety by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), AFL-CIO airline unions today held a joint press conference to show their support for FAA employees and their unions.

The unions -- representing pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, and customer service workers -- also endorsed legislation, S. 2201, by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and twelve others which would deny the FAA the ability to unilaterally impose contract terms on its workers.

Saying that AFL-CIO unions demand that our government "sets the gold standard" on safety, **Edward Wytkind, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department** said that the current leadership of the FAA has, "created an atmosphere of acrimony and distrust which severely impedes the efforts of workers and management -- in a collaborative, constructive manner -- to discuss how to improve both the safety and the efficiency of the world's largest aviation system."

**Air Line Pilots Association President Capt. Duane Woerth** lamented the Bush administration's failure to address the evaporation of surpluses which existed five years ago in the Aviation Trust Fund. Saying this budgetary crisis is not the fault of FAA employees, Woerth said that workers, "can't be scapegoated" for the financial state of FAA. He called for a fair and mutual resolution to ongoing collective bargaining at the FAA.

**Pat Friend, President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA**, spoke of how her members rely upon the work of those in the air traffic control system. She criticized an FAA which she said puts, "a dollar value on safety." Flight attendants, Friend said, have experienced firsthand the federal government's foot-dragging on training and cabin safety issues. The flight attendant leader drew a parallel between airlines misusing bankruptcy laws to slash workers' wages and pensions, and FAA management misusing a loophole in FAA personnel law to trample on collective bargaining rights.

**International Association of Machinists Airline Coordinator Tom Brickner** expressed his union's strong support for the Obama bill, saying it is a "common sense" approach to collective bargaining, a process he said must be based on "fairness and respect." Brickner said that the FAA's belief that it can unilaterally impose contracts on its workers is "part of a disturbing trend of putting costs ahead of safety," citing the FAA's deteriorating level of oversight of airlines which outsource their maintenance around the globe.

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**Professional Airways Systems Specialists President Tom Brantley** noted that the FAA has unilaterally imposed contracts on four of his union's bargaining units, and has launched a "misinformation campaign to attack the livelihoods of public servants." According to Brantley, the FAA has dismissed PASS members from serving on FAA panels to develop and implement new air traffic control technologies. Brantley rebuffed FAA contentions that the Obama bill would hurt its negotiating position, saying that this would only be true, "if that position is based solely on the agency's ability to impose a contract unilaterally."

**John Carr, President of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association**, said he appreciated the strong showing of support for "efforts to bring fairness and accountability to the FAA negotiating process." Carr said that what had long been a constructive labor-management dialogue at the FAA has been replaced by an agency that is now, "determined to malign and attack a critical group of its own workforce." Carr endorsed the Obama bill saying that, "a small change in the law... would make a big difference by restoring fairness and true accountability to the negotiation process."

*TTD represents 29 member unions in the rail, aviation, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. [For more information, visit www.ttd.org.](http://www.ttd.org)*