



NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation Labor Applauds Progress on Foreign Aircraft Repair Safety

Drug and Alcohol Testing and Routine Inspections Would Be Required at Foreign Facilities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Transportation unions praise the passage of Rep. Ted Poe's (R-TX) amendment to the FAA bill that requires drug and alcohol testing for mechanics at foreign aircraft repair stations who work on U.S. aircraft.

"Why bother drug and alcohol testing U.S. mechanics if we're not going to require the same of foreign mechanics who work on the same aircraft?" said Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO. "Transportation labor thanks Congressman Poe for addressing this discrepancy and for championing this issue."

To date, the FAA has refused to require drug and alcohol testing of foreign repair stations working on U.S. aircraft. Instead, they perpetuate a myth that its rules are applied uniformly. Transportation unions have been working to correct this double standard and bring one level of safety to aircraft repair.

"As more and more maintenance work is outsourced, safety standards abroad must be as tough as they are here," Wytkind said.

According to recent reports, there are 698 FAA-certified foreign aircraft repair stations, an increase of more than 345 percent since the rules governing foreign certification were eased in 1998. In 2006, \$3.7 billion of the \$5.7 billion spent on aircraft maintenance and repair was outsourced. According to a new government report, 35 percent of outsourced heavy maintenance work at nine U.S. carriers was sent overseas in 2006.

The bill, thanks to Chairman Jim Oberstar and Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Costello, will also require foreign aircraft repair stations to be inspected by FAA inspectors at least twice a year. Despite increased use of outsourced repair facilities, the FAA has continued to concentrate inspections on in-house facilities. In addition, a large amount of repair work is being outsourced to subcontractors that are not FAA certified. The bill ensures that critical maintenance work will be done either at in-house facilities or at certified repair stations with proper oversight.

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