



# NEWS RELEASE

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## House FAA Bill Makes Significant Strides to Improve Safety, Working Conditions for Aviation Employees

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Transportation unions applaud the important worker rights and safety improvements made by the FAA reauthorization bill, passed today by the U.S. House of Representatives.

“This bill makes meaningful safety improvements, strong investments in our aviation system, and addresses many transportation union priorities that will make a big difference in employees’ daily work,” said Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

FedEx truck drivers and mechanics look forward to the right to form and join a union. Until today, FedEx has managed to convince Congress that virtually its entire workforce is composed of aviation workers so that it can qualify for the Railway Labor Act (RLA) for purposes of labor-management relations. It is much more difficult to organize a union under the RLA as opposed to the National Labor Relations Act because it must be done company-wide instead of locally.

“Mechanics and truck drivers are not aviation workers – end of story,” Wytkind said. “FedEx had fought successfully until now to preserve an uneven playing field with its competitors. It is a new day for FedEx employees.”

Air traffic controllers and the FAA will be sent back to the drawing board to reach a contract that ended last year with the FAA imposing its final contract offer on workers without their consent. This move, and other tactics by the FAA to avoid true collective bargaining with its unions, have destroyed morale, and exacerbated critical staffing shortages. The bill institutes a fair and balanced system of bargaining, mediation and arbitration for disputes.

“Congress restored fairness to the FAA collective bargaining process today,” Wytkind said. “If left unchanged, the FAA will simply refuse to bargain in good faith with all of its unions and continue to force contracts on its workers.”

The FAA took over workplace safety policy for flight attendants in 1975 and has failed miserably to protect this workforce, which has an on-the-job injury rate far higher than the national average. This FAA bill sets in motion Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) basic workplace protections on aircraft, including sanitation, blood borne pathogens, and noise rules.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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The bill makes long-overdue updates to standards for safe and effective airport rescue and fire fighting. According to existing policy, airport fire departments are not required to be capable of performing passenger rescue in the event of a crash or fire.

The bill reaffirms existing law that U.S. air carriers must remain under the ownership and control of U.S. citizens. This provision will be increasingly important as the U.S. and the European Union enter into second-stage talks for their "Open Skies" aviation pact. European ministers have stated that they will pursue a fully liberalized aviation system, free of restrictions on ownership and control, with foreign carriers serving point-to-point U.S. domestic markets. This bill makes clear that their intentions will be met with stiff resistance.

"Lawmakers must make clear to our government negotiators that permitting foreign control or ownership of our airlines is a non-starter," Wytkind said.

As air traffic has increased, the potential for runway incursions increases. The bill provides for additional automatic warning systems, enhanced signage and surface markings, improved airfield lighting systems and additional air traffic control procedures to protect against accidents.

The bill improves safety and oversight by increasing staffing levels among air traffic controllers, FAA safety inspectors and other specialists.

Several significant studies will be performed to better understand the effects of flight crew fatigue, and cabin air quality and temperature.

In addition to requiring drug and alcohol testing for employees of foreign aircraft repair stations who work on U.S. aircraft, the bill also requires foreign stations to be inspected by FAA inspectors at least twice a year. The bill also ensures that critical maintenance work will be done either at in-house facilities or at certified repair stations with proper oversight.

"This bill is the culmination of an enormous amount of work, and thoughtful leadership by Chairman Oberstar and Subcommittee Chairman Costello," Wytkind said. "We will work hard to retain these meaningful and important reforms as the Senate advances its bill."

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*TTD represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).*