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Airline Jobs, National Security at Risk by Bush Plan Allowing Foreign Control of U.S. Airlines ***AFL-CIO Transportation Leader Testifies at House Hearing***

Washington, D.C. – The Bush administration's controversial plan to allow foreign control of U.S. airlines "weakens the aviation industry at the worst possible time," threatens national security, and violates existing law, Edward Wytkind, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department (TTD) said today.

Testifying before the House Aviation Subcommittee, Wytkind said that the proposed regulatory changes would "inspire even more outsourcing of vital airline functions to the detriment of safety, security, and jobs." Despite the clear intent of a 2003 law to tighten oversight of maintenance performed overseas on U.S. aircraft, Wytkind said that the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration have responded to this congressional edict with little more than, "broken promises and missed deadlines."

Wytkind said that allowing foreign interests to control U.S. airlines would undercut the Civilian Reserve Air Fleet, a Pentagon program which relies upon commercial airlines for reliable and timely transports of U.S. troops and equipment in times of war.

The proposal, which Wytkind said "denies Congress its historic role in shaping aviation policy," is the result of "the Administration's desire to placate the European Union in attempt to secure a new aviation services pact. It is that simple - this change in foreign control rules is a give-away at the negotiating table."

U.S. airlines are already seeking to skirt U.S. labor laws by replacing staff, such as flight attendants, with citizens of foreign countries, Wytkind told the panel, adding that the proposed changes "would directly threaten the jobs and the rights of the workers we represent as airlines are given yet another tool to seek out the lowest common denominator in wage and benefit costs.

A majority of the House Aviation Subcommittee are sponsors of H.R. 4542, legislation by Reps. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ) and James Oberstar (D-MN) which would prevent the Administration from implementing these proposed changes for one year and require the Department of Transportation to report on the impact that changes would have on U.S. workers and our nation's economy and security. At today's hearing, the Bush proposal was widely criticized by both Republican and Democrat members of the Subcommittee.

Click [here](#) for a copy of Wytkind's full statement.

TTD represents 29 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)

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