



A bold voice for transportation workers

February 15, 2011

Please Support Amendment to Strengthen Drug and Alcohol Testing Requirements for Foreign Repair Station Mechanics

Dear Representative:

As the House Transportation and Infrastructure Full Committee prepares to mark-up the FAA Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011, (H.R. 658) we urge you to vote in support of an amendment offered by Representative Lipinski that would strengthen the foreign repair stations safety provision in the underlying bill. Specifically, Lipinski's amendment would strengthen drug and alcohol testing requirements for foreign mechanics working on U.S. aircraft.

Over the years, U.S. airlines have steadily increased outsourcing of maintenance work performed at facilities here and abroad. According to the Department of Transportation Inspector General (DOT IG), major carriers outsourced an average of 64 percent of their maintenance expenses in 2007 compared to 37 percent in 1996. For heavy airframe maintenance work performed in the same year, which includes complete tear downs of aircraft that can take up to seven weeks, the figure jumps to 71 percent. Out of all the heavy airframe maintenance work that is outsourced by major carriers, 27 percent is performed by foreign repair stations.

We have long been concerned that foreign repair station mechanics working on U.S. aircraft at FAA certified stations are not held to the same drug and alcohol testing standards as U.S. mechanics. Regardless of whether maintenance work is performed at domestic facilities or abroad, Congress must work to ensure one level of safety for work performed on U.S. aircraft. The amendment offered by Representative Lipinski would close an outstanding safety loophole by mandating that foreign repair station mechanics are held to the same drug and alcohol testing rules as workers at domestic stations.

In contrast, H.R. 658 would allow the FAA to establish a drug and alcohol program for foreign mechanics that it determines is "acceptable" and consistent with the laws of foreign countries. To ensure a high level of safety for maintenance work performed on U.S. aircraft abroad, drug and alcohol testing programs should be consistent with existing U.S. statutory requirements; not determined by subjective interpretation.

Furthermore, foreign countries should not be able to limit the safety requirements of FAA certified stations working on U.S. aircraft. The Lipinski amendment would not require foreign countries to change their laws; it would merely ensure that FAA certified foreign repair stations working on U.S. aircraft comply with the same drug and alcohol testing rules that U.S. stations and their employees must follow.

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



Representative Lipinski's amendment will help promote aviation safety and I urge you to support it when it is considered at Committee mark-up. Please contact me directly or TTD Legislative Representative Mia Clarkson at 202/628-9262 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind". The signature is stylized with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President