



A bold voice for transportation workers

March 14, 2013

Support the Brown/Isakson Amendment #83

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I ask that as you consider the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution (CR) you support amendment #83 offered by Senators Sherrod Brown and Johnny Isakson to strike Section 560. This language would establish a fee reimbursement arrangement for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and lead to a system based not on security or travel needs, but a “pay-to-play” allocation of CBP resources.

The growth of the international aviation market provides an important opportunity for the U.S. aviation industry and its workers, and CBP plays a crucial role in facilitating safe and efficient international air travel. Unfortunately we recognize that due to CBP fiscal restraints, airport staffing levels have not been able to meet the greater demand for international air travel. As a result, CBP processing times at U.S. international gateways can exceed 3 hours, dissuading international travel into the U.S., and limiting job opportunities for U.S. aviation workers. We believe it is important for CBP to have the financial means to meet the demand of international travel into the U.S., but in a way that also expands opportunities for U.S. air carriers and their workforce.

Unfortunately, Section 560 of the CR does not achieve this goal. This provision would allow CBP to enter into 5 reimbursable agreements with third-party entities at points of entry requested by the third-party. These third-party entities could include foreign governments or private sector groups, and would allow for repayment of overtime and other expenses for CBP offices. As a result, this provision would create a “pay-to-play” system where CBP resources are allocated based on who can afford to enter into reimbursement agreements as opposed to where the need for CBP resources is greatest. Additionally, it could divert resources away from areas that represent market opportunities for U.S. carriers and job growth for their workforce.

We agree that CBP must have the resources it needs to foster growth in international aviation and the U.S. aviation workforce, and welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to find appropriate funding mechanisms. We look forward to a productive dialogue to find the right solution. Thank you for your consideration, and we urge the passage of the Brown/Isakson Amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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

