



A bold voice for transportation workers

November 19, 2019

Vote YES on the Safe Aircraft Maintenance Standards Act

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trade Department, AFL-CIO, I urge you to support H.R. 5119, the Safe Aircraft Maintenance Standards Act, when the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee considers it during tomorrow's markup. This important, bipartisan legislation will help ensure one level of safety and security for all maintenance performed on U.S. aircraft, whether at home or abroad.

U.S. airlines' increasing reliance on foreign aircraft maintenance operations has presented a number of policy challenges concerning safety, security and job creation. Simply put, foreign stations working on U.S. aircraft are not held to the same regulatory standards and oversight that domestic stations and their workers must follow. Unsurprisingly, this double standard has led to safety lapses and poor repair work at foreign stations that should alarm any person who flies on U.S. airlines. Pilots and domestic mechanics have reported cabin doors being installed incorrectly, leading to in-flight depressurization; missing equipment; aircraft damage that has been simply painted over; and even drug smuggling operations using the nose of aircraft.

H.R. 5119 would address many of these problems and ensure that mandates already passed by Congress are actually implemented. Specifically, the bill would require the FAA to conduct security background checks on foreign maintenance workers; impose risk-based safety and security inspections for foreign stations; require drug and alcohol testing for mechanics performing safety sensitive work; require unannounced inspections by FAA safety personnel; and ensure that foreign mechanics and supervisors meet FAA certification standards. These are common-sense reforms that would bring foreign stations up to the standards that we require for domestic operations.

Congress has already mandated many of these reforms in legislation dating back to 2012. Unfortunately, both the Trump and Obama administrations have failed to implement Congressional directives. H.R. 5119 would help ensure that these reforms are made by imposing a moratorium on all new foreign repair station certifications until the requirements in this bill are implemented. This same legislative tool was used in 2008 when the executive branch failed to establish a security rule for foreign repair stations as required by the 2003 VISION 100 Act. A final security rule was ultimately put into place in 2012.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer



The oversight and safety standard disparity between domestic and foreign repair stations has increased the financial incentive for U.S. airlines to outsource this critical work. Already, it has resulted in the loss of thousands of U.S. maintenance jobs. U.S. mechanics are the best and safest in the world, yet they are being forced to compete for work with foreign operations that must meet only a fraction of the safety and security standards imposed on U.S. stations. These workers deserve the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.

TTD and our affiliates have been consistent with our demands that there be one level of safety and security for all repair stations that perform work on U.S. aircraft. Yet our pursuit of this goal has been routinely undermined by missed deadlines, poor oversight, and watered down regulations. In the meantime, the amount of maintenance work performed overseas continues to increase unabated. In an era defined by security threats and job loss, Congress owes it to aircraft workers and the flying public to commit to the highest levels of safety and security in the aviation industry both here and overseas. Passing H.R. 5119 into law would help make that a reality. I urge you to vote YES.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry I. Willis".

Larry I. Willis
President