AFSCME
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June 24, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), including the thousands of AFSCME-represented Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees, I am writing to express our views regarding FAA reform. In particular, AFSCME is very concerned about proposals to privatize the work currently performed by dedicated public servants in the Air Traffic Control Organization (ATO).

The most significant issue facing the FAA isn't operational control; it's the lack of stable, secure, and long-term funding. Without fiscal certainty it is impossible for the agency to properly implement the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), as well as maintain and improve facilities. Over the past four years instead of stable funding the agency has faced substantial uncertainty. Operating under multiple continuing resolutions has hindered the agency's long-term planning and implementation. The FAA has shouldered sequestration cuts as well as two shutdowns – one agency-wide, one government-wide – since 2011. And, just a month ago, the House's fiscal year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill made a $100 million cut to the FAA's capital fund. All of these burdens have proven to be detrimental to the agency at headquarters and around the country. Further, the uncertainty has increased restoration times, caused delays in getting needed parts and equipment, postponed modernization, resulted in missed or deferred preventative maintenance, and precipitated agency hiring freezes and furloughs.

Separating the ATO functions from the FAA and organizing any of its functions under a non-government entity is not the solution to funding problems, not will it further the agency's modernization efforts. Such a move would only add to the FAA's uncertainty. The FAA must maintain its current structure to protect national aviation safety and ensure operational control and oversight. It is also critical that all experienced and highly skilled FAA employees remain federal workers and continue to receive the benefits and worker protections of other federal employees. AFSCME opposes any and all efforts to privatize any function within the FAA.

Sincerely,

Scott Frey

Scott Frey
Director of Federal Government Affairs

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