

July 13, 2017

Dear Representative:

We write to oppose privatizing the FAA's air traffic control system as mandated by the 21st Century Aviation Innovation, Reform and Reauthorization Act (the 21st Century AIRR Act or H.R.2997). This misguided bill would transfer jobs to a nonprofit corporation, which could then outsource work to for-profit contractors. This scheme puts at risk both aviation safety and middle-class jobs.

The commercial aviation industry is a cornerstone of the American economy, contributing \$1.5 trillion to the economy each year and supplying more than 10 million American jobs. FAA employees enable the National Airspace System to fly two million passengers to and from their destinations on approximately 70,000 flights every day. Our national aviation system is a valuable resource created over decades. We should not squander it on misguided reforms.

Today, aviation safety is preserved by federal employees, mostly veterans, who have dedicated their professional lives to maintaining and improving the world's safest national aviation system. The FAA has invested more than \$50 billion into communities through the Facilities & Equipment account alone. The F&E account currently receives approximately \$2.8 billion per year which is "Buy America" compliant. Privatization will put this system at risk. Moving over 30,000 employees from the federal sector to the private sector will be no easy task. Proponents say the transfer will take three years but it could take seven or more years according to independent studies and experience with significantly smaller foreign aviation systems. H.R.2997 would also provide massive subsidies to the new ATC Corporation in the form of the free transfer of land, equipment and facilities worth billions of dollars. Furthermore, the bill would give control of our aviation system to an unaccountable board of directors.

Have no doubt, air traffic control privatization is an attack on good jobs. After the transition to the ATC Corporation, H.R.2997 offers no guarantees for the thousands of middle class veterans who work at the FAA today. This will make it easy to slash wages, eliminate benefits and outsource work. Privatization would enable the ATC Corporation to ignore domestic preference programs, like Buy America, that create thousands of private sector American jobs. We have seen these attacks before. Privatizing federal jobs often costs taxpayers more while cutting the quality of service. Manufacturing corporations have made big promises but then cut wages, slashed retirement and outsourced jobs. ATC privatization is simply a new chapter of the same old story.

The United States has the safest, largest and most complex aviation system in the world. We urge you to oppose H.R.2997, or any other effort to privatize the FAA's air traffic control system, to ensure that our aviation system continues to be operated for the safety and benefit of the flying public.

Sincerely,

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

American Federation of Government Employees

American Federation of Musicians

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers

Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

In the Public Interest

Jobs With Justice

Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association  
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)  
National Employment Law Project  
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)  
National Hispanic Coalition of FAA Employees  
National Weather Service Employees Organization  
Office and Professional Employees International Union  
Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, Inc. (PATCO, Inc.)  
Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees (PAACE)  
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO (PASS)  
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO  
Writers Guild of America, East