

September 8, 2017

Dear Representative:

We write in opposition to privatization of the nation's air traffic control system. This misguided scheme poses a significant threat to the labor rights and jobs of American workers. The proposal has been included as the centerpiece of both the 21st Century Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization Act (H.R.2997) and President Trump's infrastructure proposal. We urge you to oppose privatization as part of either the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or in any infrastructure investment plan.

H.R.2997 includes wholesale attacks on labor rights. The House bill would make it nearly impossible for air traffic services workers to have a union. The legislation redefines "majority" in a union representation election. Rather than counting a simple majority of the ballots returned, the new system would count a non-voter as opposing the union. It also makes it easier to eliminate existing unions. Under the bill, the corporation could "rescind, amend, or alter" bargaining unit status. This would give management the right to eliminate, combine or break apart union bargaining units without cause. Once enacted into federal law, these provisions could be used as precedent to roll back labor rights in other labor relations statutes.

These schemes envision transferring over 30,000 federal employees to a non-profit air traffic control corporation. The corporation, like most federal contractors, is likely to offshore many of these jobs. To make matters worse, supporters of these proposals brag about increasing automation, which will exacerbate the job losses among employees transferred to the new air traffic control entity. Privatization would also eliminate domestic manufacturing jobs which are tied to FAA spending. The FAA Facilities & Equipment account appropriation was \$2.8 billion in the last fiscal year and more than \$50 billion has been spent on procurement over the last 20 years. These federal funds must comply with "Buy America" rules, which mandate the purchase of American produced goods. A vote to support privatization would put thousands of existing American jobs at risk.

Privatization also threatens employment in small and rural areas. Despite promises to invest in rural infrastructure, these privatization proposals would cause cuts to jobs and services at smaller airports. H.R.2997 would eliminate \$1.54 billion in guaranteed Essential Air Service (EAS) funding according to the bi-partisan Congressional Budget Office. The president has proposed eliminating all EAS appropriations beginning October 1. Without EAS, scheduled air service to over 170 small and rural communities is likely to be eliminated. No matter how you look at it, air traffic control privatization—combined with federal budget cuts—would pose a serious threat to jobs in these communities that depend on aviation.

Privatization would hurt veteran employment. Throughout the federal government, veterans of the United States armed forces receive a hiring preference. As a result, over 60 percent of current employees in some FAA bargaining units are veterans. But after the changeover to the corporation, veterans' preference would no longer apply. Furthermore, outsourcing and automation would eliminate positions currently held by veterans.

Proposals to privatize our air traffic control system are likely to cause the loss of thousands of American jobs in both the public and private sectors. The legislation includes provisions which would undermine labor rights and harm our veterans. Together, these factors would reinforce wage

stagnation and make it harder for Americans to get good jobs that support a family. Privatization is an attack on the American middle class.

We urge you to oppose air traffic control privatization in all its forms.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
National Association of Government Employees  
National Federation of Federal Employees  
Professional Association of Aeronautical Center Employees (PAACE)  
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists  
Amalgamated Transit Union  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Guild of Variety Artists  
American Radio Association (ARA)  
Demos  
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO  
Federal Education Association/NEA  
Guild of Italian American Actors  
In the Public Interest  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers  
International Longshore and Warehouse Union  
International Longshoremen's Association  
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots  
Jobs With Justice  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association  
Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO  
NAACP  
National Employment Law Project (NELP)  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees  
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)  
National Weather Service Employees Organization  
Office and Professional Employees International Union  
Patent Office Professional Association  
Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
SMART-Transportation Division  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
Utility Workers Union of America  
Workplace Fairness