



Trump/Shuster FAA Privatization Gives Big Airlines Carte Blanche; Safety and Passengers Lose Out

President Donald Trump announced his support for the privatization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and with it, the nation's air traffic control system. The proposal will separate the Air Traffic Control system from the federal government and place the FAA assets and oversight into the hands of the airline corporations. The President is meeting with several airline CEO's and top executives on Monday, who are urging the President and Congress to gift them the government's FAA assets, as well as oversight of its operations.

NFFE strongly opposes this dangerous FAA privatization plan, as it would give big airlines a monopoly over the aviation market and nearly limitless power to cut funding to the ATC control system, and allows the airlines to raise fees on consumers without any congressional oversight or public accountability. In addition to likelihood of new fees and taxes, access to airports and gates for general aviation and small competitors would be driven by the airlines' priorities, instead of the common interests of the general aviation community and the American people.

President Trump's proposal is based on the legislation introduced this year by Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA), who believes that the Air Traffic Control system needs "modernization." However, the FAA is already the safest and most successful system in the world, as FAA employees design, install, manage, operate and maintain, safely fly two million passengers to and from their destinations on approximately 70,000 flights per day. The U.S. 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.

Under a private corporation—one controlled by the major airlines—air traffic efficiency and safety risks will grow as the major airlines will place more planes in the air in the pursuit of profit. If this legislation passes, the federal workforce that now oversees the air traffic control system will become private sector employees under the control of the airlines. There is little doubt that this move will result in reduced pay, cuts to training programs, and lower safety standards. Although this private corporation will tout saving of tax dollars, airlines will pass along any costs to flying passengers who will decide fees per ticket without the oversight or consent of Congress as currently required.

"The United States has the safest, largest, and most complex aviation system in the world and that system should continue to be operated solely for the public's benefit and safety, not for the benefit of wealthy airline CEOs that will operate the privatized system," stated Randy Erwin, NFFE National President. "This legislation is offensive to every American because it will trade safety for airline profits. There is no other reason to privatize the air traffic control system." Erwin continues, "NFFE is working hard with its union coalition partners and with like-minded industry partners to stop this dangerous and profiteering legislation that destroys air travel safety and airline competitiveness."

Note: The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will conduct a hearing on this legislation this Thursday. NFFE and its coalition partners will attend and invites any members to meet us there.