



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE Press Release

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NFFE Strongly Opposes the Dangerous and Profiteering AIRR Act that Would Privatize Air Traffic Control and Air Travel Safety

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) strongly opposes the 21st Century Aviation Innovation, Reform & Reauthorization Act (AIRR Act), which is scheduled for committee mark-up on Tuesday in the U.S. House of Representatives. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) has been pushing for the privatization of air traffic control services in the U.S., which has been historically rejected by Congress. Currently, air traffic control and air travel safety fall under the authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); however, the AIRR Act will remove this function from the FAA and give it to a private organization controlled by airlines and the aviation industry, raising serious concerns among accountability and safety advocates.

“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 a privatized system,” stated Randy Erwin, NFFE National President. “This legislation is simply a bad idea. It trades safety for airline profits. There is no other reason to privatize the air traffic control system.”

Under this legislation, a private corporation—one without representation or input from the flying public—will self-regulate air travel safety and traffic, accountable only to its governing board which would be dominated by airline and general aviation corporations. This will inevitably lead to unsafe conditions as airlines increase air traffic and decrease regulations in the pursuit of profit. Airline corporations will also control passenger ticket fees that are now regulated by Congress, and fee increases would be implemented by a simple vote from the industry-controlled board of directors.

To complicate matters, the federal workforce that now oversees the air traffic control system will become private sector employees under the control of corporate airlines. Once the workforce is outsourced from the federal system, the move could result in reduced pay and benefits, cuts to training programs, lowered safety standards, and no protections under federal whistleblower laws.

“This legislation is a bad idea for the American people,” Erwin continued. “NFFE is working hard with its union coalition partners and with like-minded industry partners to stop this dangerous and profiteering legislation that risks destroying air travel safety in this country.”

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to www.nffe.org.