



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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January 26, 2009

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

The Honorable James Oberstar, Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Jerry Costello, Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2251 Rayburn House Office Building

Gentlemen,

As we begin the 111th Congress and you prepare to reintroduce the Federal Aviation Reauthorization bill (FAA bill) with adjustments to the bill, we want to express our concerns about several provisions.

First, we must comment on the FAA personnel management provision which would void the 2006 air traffic controller contract at significant cost to taxpayers, provide unprecedented reach back pay to air traffic controllers, and create a binding arbitration process. We are fully supportive of establishing a binding arbitration process for all FAA employees for future negotiations and look forward to working with you on such a provision. However, at a time of massive lay offs and job losses in all areas of the economy, including the aviation sector, and enormous Federal deficits, the compensation reach back provision passed by the House last Congress is unacceptable in fairness to other FAA and Federal employees. We would ask that you closely review the NATCA provision and make adjustments that are equitable to the balance of Federal employees as well as the over 30,000 other FAA employees. In the almost two years since House consideration and passage of H.R. 2881, the potential cost of this provision has dramatically risen. As you may know, the current average annual air traffic controller salary with benefits is \$166,100. At a time when U.S. taxpayers are making tough decisions to balance their household budgets, we must ensure that the Federal Government makes the same sound fiscal decisions.

Honorable Oberstar and Honorable Costello
January 26, 2009
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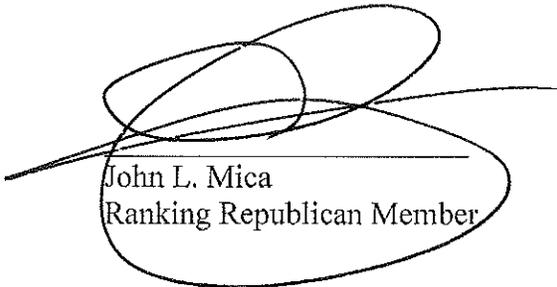
Second, the provision related to Foreign Repair Stations must be reviewed to ensure that it does not violate bi-lateral agreements and that it will not risk retaliatory actions by foreign governments against U.S. air carriers. The ramifications of such action by foreign governments cannot be ignored, especially given the current state of the airline industry.

Third, some of the requirements set forth in H.R. 2881, such as the notification requirements for use of insecticides in passenger aircraft, occupational safety and health standards for flight attendants on board aircraft, and aircraft rescue and firefighting standards, must be reviewed to understand their real implications. It is incumbent on us to ensure that all such requirements are practical and to eliminate any unintended consequences.

Finally, there are provisions that were in H.R. 2881 that have not been subject to public hearings, discussion or debate. Included among these are the express carrier employee protection and the air carrier citizenship provisions. We would encourage you to allow regular Committee consideration of these important issues.

It is very important that we reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration so that the Agency can move forward with the important tasks ahead. We look forward to working with you on this critical piece of legislation and appreciate your consideration of our thoughts and concerns on the matter.

Sincerely,



John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member



Thomas Petri
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on Aviation