



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

**Bill Shuster
Chairman**

Washington, DC 20515

**Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member**

Mathew M. Sturges, Staff Director

October 16, 2017

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

**ATC PRIVATIZATION POISON PILL
HOLDS UP IMPORTANT AVIATION SAFETY
AND OTHER REFORMS**

Oppose H.R. 2997, the 21st Century AIRR Act

Dear Democratic Colleague:

You may have seen a recent letter from the Air Line Pilots Association, the Association of Flight Attendants, and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association regarding H.R. 2997, a pending bill that privatizes the Nation's air traffic control system.

Please find, below, our response to that letter.

If you have any questions about the flawed ATC privatization proposal in H.R. 2997, please do not hesitate to contact us or the Democratic staff of the Subcommittee on Aviation at extension 5-9161.

Sincerely,

PETER DeFAZIO
Ranking Member

RICK LARSEN
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation

* * * Begin letter text * * *

October 16, 2017

Capt. Tim Canoll
President
Air Line Pilots Association
1625 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036

Ms. Sara Nelson
President
Association of Flight Attendants
501 3rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Mr. Paul Rinaldi
President
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
1325 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Capt. Canoll, Ms. Nelson, and Mr. Rinaldi:

We were disappointed to receive your October 11, 2017, letter regarding H.R. 2997, which privatizes the Nation's air traffic control (ATC) system. While we certainly agree with your assessment that the United States needs "long-term sustainability, predictability, and safety improvements" in its civil aviation system, H.R. 2997 will not provide them. Instead, the poison pill of privatization, included in H.R. 2997, continues to hold up enactment of a long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization, preventing critical, bipartisan reforms.

As you know, more than 30 labor organizations strongly oppose ATC privatization. These labor organizations view ATC privatization as a wholesale attack on labor rights that will make it easier to eliminate existing unions. Although we recognize that you may not agree with these organizations, we view your brothers and sisters in labor as important voices for working men and women.

In addition, in your letter, you cite a number of provisions that led your organizations to support H.R. 2997. We fought hard to include each of those provisions in the bill, and share your desire to see these long-overdue provisions enacted into law.

You state that the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) supports the bill because, among other things, it upholds current training requirements for airline first officers and mandates the installation of secondary cockpit barriers in newly manufactured aircraft. We have repeatedly fought industry efforts to roll back pilot training rules, and Representative André Carson (D-IN) authored the amendment that added the requirement for secondary cockpit barriers.

You state that the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) supports the bill because it includes its top priority: a statutory minimum rest period for flight attendants of 10 hours between duty periods. During consideration of the FAA reauthorization bill in the 114th Congress, Representative Michael Capuano (D-MA) offered the amendment to require a statutory minimum rest period for flight attendants. This Congress, we worked over many months to ensure its

inclusion in H.R. 2997. You also note that AFA supports the bill because it bans voice calls on planes, protects airline employees from passenger assault, and requires the FAA to consider seat pitch a matter of safety. Again, Democrats strongly advocated for each of these provisions in developing the FAA reauthorization bill.

You state that the National Air Traffic Controllers Association supports the bill "because it provides a stable, predictable funding stream." Unfortunately, we disagree. H.R. 2997 slashes the "stable, predictable funding stream" that funds the aviation system— excise taxes— by 80 percent. It leaves the establishment of a new fee structure up to the private corporation and the most likely outcome is not stability or predictability, but litigation.

For many years, we have fought together with you to preserve and expand protections for working men and women and to safeguard the safety of the flying public. Our position has not changed. We will continue to push for the critical, bipartisan provisions of H.R. 2997. However, we strongly oppose H.R. 2997 in its current form because the bill's handful of pro-labor provisions cannot outweigh the irrevocable damage that ATC privatization will inflict upon our aviation system.

Instead of urging Members to support H.R. 2997, we urge you to work with us to enact the bipartisan reforms that are highlighted in your letter. Together, we could harness a powerful coalition to achieve our mutual priorities that the House and Senate could enact without controversy and without any further delay.

Sincerely,



PETER DeFAZIO
Ranking Member



RICK LARSEN
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation