



September 29, 2017

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

Aviation leaders in Massachusetts are opposed to H.R. 2997. The **Cape Area Pilots Association, Colonial Chapter EAA 279, Fitchburg Pilots Association, Fly The Baystate Challenge, Mansfield Pilots Association, Massachusetts Air and Space Museum, Massachusetts Airport Management Association, Massachusetts Business Aviation Association, New Bedford Regional Pilots Association, New England Helicopter Council, Project Take Off** and **The South Shore Flying Club** collectively represent a majority of the state's aviation community, and we have joined with over 150 other aviation associations around the country to oppose H.R. 2997.

Recently, the three entities specifically created to provide Congress with non-partisan research and analysis have reviewed the air traffic control (ATC) "privatization" proposal being pushed by the big airlines. The Congressional Research Service said H.R. 2997 was "likely unconstitutional." The Congressional Budget Office said the bill would raise the deficit by \$100 billion. Finally, the Government Accountability Office said privatization would interfere with ATC programs that have delivered \$2.7 billion in benefits to all users of the system and are on budget.

Since the introduction of H.R. 2997 in June, Captain Sully Sullenberger, the hero-pilot of the Miracle on the Hudson publicly said the bill would devastate rural communities. Jim Lovell, the heroic commander of Apollo 13, and several other astronauts believe H.R. 2997 would turn the ATC system over to a private board unaccountable to Congress and could threaten our national security. The former commanders of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds said the bill will "add billions to our nation's budget deficit, negatively impact our national security, and needlessly complicate border protection."

These highly respected voices on aviation are not only some of America's best pilots, they are some of America's best people. They have demonstrated their willingness to put the safety and security of others ahead of their own. Their positions on this issue aren't because of payment, promotions or politics, they studied the bill and came to these heartfelt and thoughtful conclusions.

The American Conservative Union Foundation has called on Chairman Shuster to remove his bill from consideration because it does not meet recognized conservative principles. Concerns with the proposal have also been raised by Americans for Tax Reform, Center for Individual Freedom, and Institute for Liberty. These organizations don't want another Amtrak or Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that are largely unaccountable to Congress.

Groups representing consumers, including FlyersRights.org, National Consumers League, and In the Public Interest are among the well-established and authentic organizations that have also raised concerns about ATC privatization.

In addition, over 100 business leaders from 50 states, most of whom are pilots, have expressed their opposition to the ATC privatization proposal from the big airlines. These are successful business leaders who understand a profit and loss statement, as well as flight plans, and are responsible for a significant number of jobs and investment.

Finally, a recent poll by CNBC found the majority of Americans oppose turning our ATC system over to a private not-for-profit entity. That is not surprising as no one would suggest turning our highway system over to the trucking companies.

For all the reasons set forth by respected government research organizations, aviation heroes, leading conservative groups, passenger rights organizations, business leaders, the Massachusetts aviation community, and a majority of Americans, we are asking you, as our elected representatives to represent our views in Congress and vote no on H.R. 2997.

Sincerely,

Cape Area Pilots Association  
John Garabedian, President

Massachusetts Airport Management Association  
Bob Mallard, President

Colonial Chapter EAA 279  
Mike Lupo, President

Massachusetts Business Aviation Association  
Dave Ricker, President

Fitchburg Pilots Association  
Steve Bortle, Co-Founder

New Bedford Regional Pilots Association  
Donald Velozo, Co-Chair

Fly The Baystate Challenge

New England Helicopter Council  
Greg Harville, President

Mansfield Pilots Association

Project Take Off  
Ken Gibson, President

Massachusetts Air and Space Museum  
Robert Segal, President

South Shore Flying Club