



October 4, 2017

Dear Members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation:

Aviation leaders in Minnesota are opposed to H.R. 2997. **The Minnesota Aviation Trades Association, Minnesota Business Aviation Association, Minnesota Council of Airports, Minnesota Pilots Association, Minnesota Seaplane Pilots Association and Veterans Airlift Command** 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, including, Peter Burwell, Burwell Enterprises, President & CEO, Minneapolis and Evan Fagen, President & COO, Fagen Inc., Granite Falls, have expressed their opposition to the ATC privatization proposal. 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 not only in Minnesota, but throughout the country.

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 Minnesota 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,

Nancy Grazzini Olson
Treasurer, Minnesota Aviation Trades Association

Randy Corfman
President, Minnesota Pilots Association

Gordon Hoff
Executive Director, Minnesota Business Aviation Association

Steve Guetter
President, Minnesota Seaplane Pilots Association

Tom Werner
Chair, Minnesota Council of Airports

Walt Fricke
Chairman, CEO and Founder
Veterans Airlift Command