

October 10, 2017

Dear Members of the South Dakota Congressional Delegation:

Aviation leaders in South Dakota are opposed H.R. 2997. Several South Dakota aviation associations and businesses 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, Citizens for Individual Freedom, and the Institute for Liberty. These organizations don't want another Amtrak or Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that are largely unaccountable to Congress.

Passenger rights groups also strongly oppose H.R. 2997. Flyer's Rights, the National Consumer League, and In the Public Interest are among the well-established and authentic organizations who have written or testified in opposition to the bill.

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 South Dakota 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.



Reply to Steven J. Hamilton
 South Dakota Pilots Association
 303 Golf Lane
 Yankton, SD 57078-1727



Sincerely,

**HOFFNER
 AVIATION**

Aberdeen Flying Service, Aberdeen
 Black Hills Aero, Spearfish
 Dale Aviation, Rapid City
 Eagle Aviation, Spearfish
 L&D Aero Service, Rapid City
 Hangar 9 FBO, Aberdeen
 Hoffner Aviation, Yankton
 Howard Aviation, Winner
 Jim Peitz Aerosports, Pierre
 Joe Foss Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, Sioux Falls
 Legacy Aviation, Tea
 MARC: Medical Air Rescue Company, Rapid City
 Maverick Air Center, Sioux Falls
 Mockingbird Flying Club, Sioux Falls
 Mustang Aviation, Pierre
 Rapid Avionics, Rapid City
 Rapid Fuel, Rapid City
 South Dakota Pilots Association (390 members)
 Wright Brothers Aviation, Mitchell
 Yankton Regional Aviation Association (113 members)

