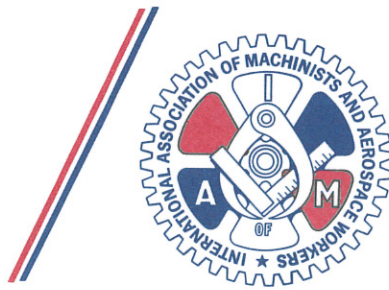


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

January 26, 2012

RE: Machinists/TCU Oppose NMB/RLA proposal to
FAA Bill

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the largest Airline and Railroad union in North America, I am writing to express our strong opposition to the Senate and House's proposed language on the anti-worker NMB repeal provision included in the House version of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization bill (H.R. 658). It should be understood, this proposal is an airline management proposal, not a compromise with labor. Historically, rail labor and management negotiate a compromise prior to suggesting any modifications to the Railway Labor Act (RLA). In this case, neither were consulted nor was a vast majority of airline labor. In fact, this proposal takes the labor/management balance backwards even beyond the conditions that existed that caused the National Mediation Board to correct the undemocratic voting procedure that counted non-voters as no votes. This change increases the weight of those with no opinion on unionization to the extent they can actually prevent an election from occurring at all. That's a step back, not a compromise.

The proposed language guts the carefully balanced safe-guards that have long existed in the RLA. Without hearings, deliberation or most significantly without any labor input, the proposed language imposes Congressionally-mandated standards for union representation elections and oversight that has always been decided by independent federal labor authorities.

The RLA was originally designed to give the National Mediation Board ("NMB") a large degree of discretion in carrying out their responsibilities. The Courts have long recognized that this discretion is vital to maintaining labor peace and the free flow of commerce. The proposed changes serve to undermine this discretion through legislatively mandating a showing of interest, which has always been viewed as an "administrative convenience;" by imposing draconian and onerous oversight provisions that will distract the Board from their true mission; by forcing the Board to ignore the will of employees who overwhelmingly vote for union representation by including a "no union" option on a run-off even when the vast majority of employees have rejected "no union" as an option; and by threatening to change the judicial deference given to the Board when it enacts regulatory changes.

We are particularly disturbed that this law undermines the rights of railroad workers and airline workers without so much as a hearing or open deliberation on its creation. The RLA is unique in our government as having been originally drafted by labor and management together. That compromise between the parties has led to 75 years of relative labor peace. We are

concerned that having this proposal foisted onto Labor without similar negotiations could unravel that carefully balanced negotiated compromise between labor and management.

We urge Congress to pass a clean FAA reauthorization bill that does not cripple the rights of railroad and airline employees.

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative and Political Director Matthew McKinnon at (301) 967-4575.

Sincerely,



R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President/IAM



Robert A. Scardelletti
National President/TCU



Sito Pantoja
General Vice President/IAM