

**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

February 9, 2012

Subj: FAA Modernization and
Reform Act of 2012

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the largest airline and railroad union in North America, I am writing to urge you to veto the deeply-flawed "FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012."

While the legislation contains long overdue improvements to the nation's air traffic infrastructure, it is hobbled with language designed to gut long-standing labor protections for air and rail workers, language that has nothing to do with aviation or rail safety.

While some have called the bill on your desk a compromise, it represents a capitulation that upsets carefully balanced safeguards that have long existed in the Railway Labor Act (RLA). Without hearings, deliberation or any labor input, the bill imposes Congressionally-mandated standards for union representation elections and oversight that have always been decided by independent federal labor authorities. This sets a dangerous precedent of politicizing the traditionally independent operation of an Executive Branch agency.

The RLA is unique in our government as having been originally drafted by labor and management together. That effort and achievement between the parties has led to 75 years of relative labor peace. We are very concerned that this legislation, as currently written, will undo that carefully balanced compromise and lead to more, not less labor unrest.

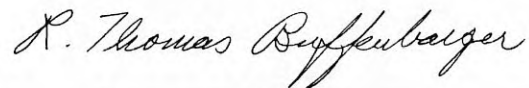
The bill contains several provisions, such as punitive new "threshold of election rules," changes to runoff election rules that favor management and roadblocks to continue union representation after carriers merge, that effectively cripple the new union representation rules put in place by the National Mediation Board in 2010.

These punitive new proposals are clearly within the scope of the March 30, 2011 statement of policy where you outlined your intent to veto any FAA Reauthorization bill that overturned the voting rules put in place in 2010.

It is unfortunate that anti-labor ideologues have held this important legislation hostage for nearly four years. It would be doubly unfortunate if that gambit were now rewarded by making this flawed legislation into the law of the land.

I respectfully urge you to veto the "FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012" and return it to Congress to pass a "clean" FAA Reauthorization bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Thomas Buffenbarger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President