



CONGRESS MUST ENFORCE FAA REAUTH. & IMPROVE AVIATION SAFETY FOR BOTH PASSENGERS & CREW

The IAM is urging Congress to ensure the implementation of several provisions included in the bipartisan FAA Reauthorization Act, signed into law in 2024, to help improve the working conditions and safety for air transport workers and passengers. We also urge Congress to pass the ROTOR Act—a key safety improvement to address airspace shortfalls in the wake of the tragic mid-air collision at DCA that killed 67 people.

The IAM Union, the largest air transport union in North America with more than 100,000 members, fought hard for several pro-worker provisions in the reauthorization law to help improve conditions for our ramp workers, mechanics, customer service agents, flight attendants and many more.

The most recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization of 2024 (P.L. 118–63) was intended to offer some positive means to ensure the safety and well-being of workers and passengers. **However, the impact of this law is only as good as its implementation and enforcement.**

Ensuring the FAA (the agency) fully carries out the Ramp Worker Safety Call to Action (Sec. 353) is paramount. This provision is intended to help combat ramp worker injuries and deaths, such as the recent death of a Delta Air Lines ground worker at Orlando International Airport on May 7, 2026, after the aircraft tug he was operating collided with a passenger boarding bridge. The new law directs the FAA to bring stakeholders together, share best practices, and implement measures to improve ramp worker safety, including addressing ingestion-zone and jet-blast accidents.

IAM Air Transport General Vice President Richie Johnsen submitted written comments to the FAA in November 2025 as the agency was shaping its questionnaire for workers as part of the call to action, saying the FAA's proposed voluntary safety questionnaires of workers was "a good step forward," but emphasized that a **broader research scope and stronger data collection are essential** to protecting frontline workers:

"Unlike isolated surveys, the IAM Union Reporting System is a comprehensive, operational tool. It collects OSHA logs from major U.S. airlines as required under OSHA regulations and integrates this with member-submitted reports. Each incident record includes detailed information on equipment, accident location, causation, and severity. There are additional features that further create data integrity and transparency through what we call 'Information Equality.'" – GVP Richie Johnsen

The IAM Union urges Congress and the FAA to:

1. Ensure implementation & improve 'Ramp Worker Safety Call to Action'

- Expand the scope of survey respondents to ensure ground workers are fully represented;
- Strengthen data collection parameters to align with real-world risks;
- Guaranteeing anonymity for all participants to prevent employer retaliation; and

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- Leverage the IAM Reporting System as a proven model for comprehensive safety analysis.

2. Improve Aircraft Maintenance Safety by enforcing robust airplane maintenance standards via strengthened FAA oversight of commercial airline repair facilities outside the United States.

- Section 302 of the law includes *unannounced* FAA inspections of foreign repair stations, and sets minimum qualifications for mechanics and other workers, including drug testing and background checks.
- Hundreds of aircraft maintenance and repair stations have been certified by the FAA outside the U.S. The current lack of uniform regulatory standards and oversight sets an unlevel field with carriers increasingly enticed by the financial incentives to push this work overseas. This has resulted in not only job losses in the U.S., but additional (and unnecessary) risks to aviation passenger safety.
- There **MUST** be a uniform level of maintenance requirements, whether in the U.S. or overseas. IAM Union members are tasked with the critical job of aircraft maintenance in North America. Offshoring this work to lower-cost countries that don't have the robust standards, compliance requirements, and enforcement of the FAA is simply unacceptable.

3. Strengthen protections for workers, including the FAA's authority to enforce employee assault and prevention plans to help ensure workers at the service counter have heightened protections from the rise in assault of unruly passengers. There have been countless videos posted on social media of airline workers at places such as the ticket counter harassed or physically abused by an unruly passenger.

4. Protect Passenger and Crew Health by mandating the FAA to evaluate cabin air quality issues stemming from bleed air (or otherwise), establish new methods for reporting fume and smoke events for crew members, and take action to address any relevant safety risks.

The IAM urges Congress to ensure federal agencies are abiding by the new law and enacting measures in the FAA Reauthorization Act intended to improve safety for both workers and passengers.

Pass the ROTOR Act (S. 2503 / H.R. 6222)

The IAM represents thousands of aviation workers whose safety and livelihoods depend on the highest standards of airspace oversight, making the ROTOR Act a direct legislative priority for the union. The legislation requires all aircraft—both civil and military—to be equipped with the technology necessary ADSB-In technology, closing a long-standing gap in situational awareness that contributed to the January 29, 2025, midair collision near Reagan National Airport that killed 67 people.

Current law does not require ADS-B in equipment, and the ROTOR Act also limits which military flights may qualify for exemptions from ADS-B Out requirements, ensuring that training flights and non-sensitive missions can no longer evade tracking in civilian airspace. The IAM has consistently fought for safety rules that protect workers and the traveling public alike, and passing the ROTOR Act—which passed the Senate unanimously—is exactly the kind of commonsense, life-saving reform that Congress must deliver without further delay.

IAM Union Legislative contacts:

David Arouca (darouca@iamaw.org);

Ty Richardson (trichardson@iamaw.org);

Connor Vargo (cvargo@iamaw.org)

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