



TAMC Nuts & Bolts

Teamsters Aviation Mechanics Coalition Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

House Republicans Vote to Gut Safety, Bust Unions with Passage of FAA Reauthorization

Teamsters Airline Division Continues Fight For Pro-Labor Language



With the final vote now completed on the House of Representatives version of the FAA Reauthorization bill, yet another clear signal has been sent that the Republican majority shows no interest in workplace safety and even less in basic employee rights.

In the vote on April 1, the House passed the Shuster amendment, specifically designed to block the attempts to improve airline safety by requiring more stringent rules on flight time/duty time and minimum rest requirements for all pilots. Additionally they kept language proposed by John Mica (R-FL) that was favored by airlines that makes it tougher for employees to be represented by unions.

“Let’s be clear about these amendments,” said Teamsters Airline Division Director David Bourne. “The Shuster amendment is designed to do one thing; to force pilots to fly more hours and

with less rest. The safety of the travelling public and people on the ground means nothing. The deaths of the passengers of Colgan 3407 mean nothing. Putting our American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines on commercial flights with crews that may not have had adequate rest before flying means nothing. This is about big business contributors calling the shots and about making money, plain and simple.”

Kevin Kuwik, a representative for the families of Flight 3407 has said the measure would make it impossible for the FAA to write safety rules in the time frame called for in the bill passed in 2010. According to public records, since being elected in 2002 Shuster (R-PA) has gotten \$115,750 in campaign money from airline industry lobbying groups, of which \$18,500 came in for his 2010 re-election.

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“This fight isn’t over,” said Bourne. “We will continue the battle in the conference committee to have these resolved. We owe it to our members, to the travelling public and most of all; we owe it to the families of Colgan 3407.”

Unacceptable Language in FAA Bill May Force Veto by White House

The Obama administration has made it clear that the President may veto the final FAA bill if it comes to his desk with unacceptable funding cuts or attempts to change the way unionization issues are handled. Republicans are seeking \$4 billion in funding cuts that would seriously hamper the long delayed efforts of upgrading the U.S. air traffic control system. Additionally, they seek to stop changes in flight time and duty time requirements for flight crews brought about by the changes demanded after the

crash of Colgan 3407, which killed all on board.

In commenting on the Republicans contention that the National Mediation Board exceeded its authority in changing how votes are counted in union elections, a statement released by the White House noted that, "The administration is committed to help working Americans exercise their right to organize under a fair and free process." Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) has already signaled that the union busting language is a non starter.

“It is unconscionable to see the Republican House majority continue to push every effort at union busting at the insistence of their corporate masters,” Bourne said. “A tremendous amount of credit is due to General President Hoffa for his leadership in this matter and for keeping the concerns and the futures of our membership and all of organized labor uppermost in the mind of President Obama and his administration.”

TAMC Lobbies For FAA Reauthorization Language



The Teamsters Aviation Mechanics Coalition (TAMC) has been carefully monitoring the status of the FAA reauthorization bill. Over the past few years, the bill has been granted emergency extensions more than 17 times. Last year was no exception. The bill that expired at the end of 2010 included strong language mandating that foreign repair stations be held to the same high standard for safety and security as repair stations here in the U.S. That includes drug abatement programs, background checks and more FAA oversight.

The November elections brought sweeping changes to the political landscape and some key supporters of our version of the legislation were lost. To that end, on December 9, 2010, Members of the TAMC traveled to Capitol Hill in an effort to secure language in the new FAA reauthorization bill. Committee members met with the staff from Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), John Warner (D-VA), Tom Udall (D-NM), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Olympia Snow (R-ME) and Bill Nelson (D-FL).

The Senators realize how important keeping this language in the Bill is and will be working with us in the coming months to ensure that it stays in. We also took a moment to reflect on the current economic situation in the US and pointed out that bringing these highly skilled, good paying jobs back on shore will help to boost the U.S. economy.

Your TAMC lobbying team consists of Chris Moore, TAMC Chair and CAL Mechanic; Dave Saucedo, UAL Mechanic; Vincent Graziano, CAL Mechanic; Jim Connolly, UAL Mechanic; Gary Kagel, CAL Mechanic; Geoff Maloney, ASA Inspector; Paul Siemenczuk, Horizon Mechanic; Tom Reid, UAL Mechanic; and Steve Olsen, CAL Mechanic. Collectively, the team has nearly 200 years of aviation maintenance experience and are well versed on the current state of the industry. We will continue to work hard for you on all industry issues that affect our profession.

The New Teamster Outsource Defect Report

Improved Form is Shorter, Easier to Use

As Mechanics working in the aviation repair field, many of us see examples of unsafe vendor maintenance on a daily basis. Sadly, these threats to flight safety are not tracked or documented regularly by the FAA.

Many critics believe that the only way to change this twisted view will be with a smoking hole. Here at the TAMC, we believe there is a safer and better way.

When the TAMC was formed a few years ago, one of our first priorities was to create a vehicle to track vendor issues. We developed the Teamster Outsource Defect Report (TODR) and had great success with the initial launch. We used the information gathered to add credibility to our visits to representatives in Congress about the growing MRO concerns.

We also used TODR reports submitted to the TAMC to gain support with various news services. One story recently shown on a PBS Frontline piece called Flying Cheaper was developed through the help of the TAMC after we could prove that dangers do exist with vendor maintenance. While the information shared

was done so discreetly, the powerful examples caught the attention of the media.

Realizing the importance of this tool, we put more effort into the TODR site and created an improved reporting standard. Our new Teamster Outsource Defect Report form is shorter, easier to use and is easily available via internet link shortcuts through various Teamster web sites: Teamsterair.org and ibtseattle.blogspot.com.

The new site also allows for more secure and quicker information gathering. When properly filled out and submitted, the form is routed directly to secured servers where it is cataloged and saved. We provide and monitor a separate, secure email address which appears after you submit the form and allows for questions or additional data to be sent. Most of all, this new form can be completed anonymously.

Please help us in the fight to protect the flying public, keep our jobs and protect our high safety standard in this industry by using the new online Teamster Outsource Defect Report form.

Rep. Jackie Speier: A Supporter In the Fight Against Outsourcing

By Dave Saucedo



We have found a new friend in our fight against the outsourcing of U.S. aircraft repair, and another voice to help keep jobs in the U.S. On February 7, 2011, several members of the San Francisco Airport Coalition sponsored a meeting with Rep. Jackie Speier at the Plumbers Union, Local 467, in Burlingame, Calif. The main topic of this meeting was outsourcing of SFO airport jobs and the impact to the community.

As a group that has been tremendously impacted by this dilemma, UAL Mechanics were invited to join in the discussions. Representing the Teamster Aviation Mechanic Coalition, I was asked to help make our case and put together a PowerPoint presentation describing just one of our concerns with outsourcing: Security with foreign airports and MRO facilities.

This topic resonated powerfully with Speier who serves on two key committees in the House of Representatives: the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Homeland Security, where she is the ranking member on

the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management. This group's broad mandate is to investigate inefficiency, mismanagement, and corruption within the entire Department of Homeland Security.

Speier has made a name for herself through her proactive approach towards protecting all Americans. We believe she completely understands our concerns and will bring about the attention to safety needed to help secure air travel in our country. Our hope is she will use her influence to help level the playing field of facility safety by improving security requirements and adding enhanced employee screening to all foreign MRO's who work on U.S.-flagged aircraft.

Speier continues her lifelong commitment to protect consumers from unsafe products but admits she needs help from all voters. She estimates that as many as 40 percent of labor workers vote for Republican representatives, many of who do not share our views to keep American workers strong. She passionately supports our cause, but openly discloses that without the help of colleagues in the House, our meeting with her will be little more than a vent session. Control of the House is vital to keep the gains achieved for the workers of this country and to keep from giving back to corporate interests.

Teamsters and TWU Continue Pressure on Congress

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After 9/11, many U.S. mainline carriers filed for bankruptcy, paving the way for thousands of aircraft maintenance jobs to be outsourced. Because of these devastating events, many highly technical, safety-sensitive jobs were sent overseas or to cheaper, non-union domestic maintenance providers.

The Transportation Workers Union (TWU) and International Brotherhood of Teamsters represent the majority of aircraft maintenance technicians still employed in the United States. As companies continue to exploit maintenance jobs through bankruptcy or low bid outsourcing practices, the TWU and the Teamsters continue to the fight to stop it. To date, both unions have worked well together supporting key components in legislation that provide job security for members while steadfastly opposing legislation that adversely affects them. The struggle has become increasingly more difficult now that Republicans control the House of Representatives.

In December, a joint letter from the TWU and the Teamsters was sent to Congressman Jerry F. Costello, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Aviation, thanking him for requesting a review by the Office of Inspector General regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's oversight of repair stations. The joint communiqué pointed out that the regulatory environment has

not kept pace with rapid changes in the industry, some of which will have a detrimental effect on safe air travel. The FAA lacks sufficient access to many facilities and does not have enough inspectors to adequately cover the alarming number of non-certified maintenance facilities, the letter stated.

In summary, the letter states, "It is our collective view, that in order to pre-empt serious incidents, accidents or terror attacks, the FAA should adopt a single standard of safety principle, applicable to all repair stations and mechanics performing work on U.S. aircraft, whether operated by airlines or contractors in the United States or aboard." The letter to Congressman Costello was signed by David Bourne, Director of the Teamsters Airline Division and John M. Conley, International Administrative Vice President for the TWU.

In early 2011 Republican Tom Petri from Wisconsin's 6th District replaced Congressman Costello as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Aviation. Congressman Costello remains a ranking committee member. Union members should contact both Congressmen to voice concerns over more damaging language now being drafted under FAA Reauthorization Bill. Congressman Costello should be thanked for his position and efforts in protecting American aviation jobs and public safety.

Forcing the F.A.A. to Fly Blind

By William J. McGee, *New York Times*

Passengers fainted when a 5-foot hole opened in the roof of a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 flying from Phoenix to Sacramento last week. The most frightening moment may have been when, as one passenger said, "You could look out and see blue sky."

It was an unusual episode in an industry with a strong safety record. But that record might be hard to sustain: on the very day that Southwest's Flight 812 was diverted to Yuma, Ariz., for an emergency landing, the House of Representatives passed a bill likely to make it more difficult to detect and prevent midair raptures, metal fatigue and other serious flight risks.

The bill would cut \$4 billion from the Federal Aviation Administration's \$37 billion budget. Representative John L. Mica, a Florida Republican who is the chairman of the House Transportation Committee, says the bill would streamline F.A.A. programs and promised the bill would "not negatively impact aviation safety."

Such streamlining would probably mean reduction of F.A.A. staff, including safety inspectors. As it is, the agency has been

short-staffed for years. According to the Government Accountability Office, 1,100 inspectors oversaw 81 airlines, 5,200 repair stations, and 625,000 pilots in 2006. A \$4 billion cut will necessarily reduce the work force further. And it's hard to imagine this will not diminish safety.

For the last five years, I've been investigating airline maintenance outsourcing for Consumers Union. Outsourcing, under which airlines shift repair and maintenance work from union employees to low-wage workers overseas and in the United States, compounds the already existing burden on safety inspectors.

Dozens of F.A.A. inspectors have told me that they no longer have enough money to conduct inspections at repair stations in China, Singapore, El Salvador, the Philippines and Mexico and other distant locations at which major fleets of American-based airlines undergo maintenance. One inspector explained that because money was tight, he had to schedule a visit to Asia weeks in advance, thus eliminating any chance of a surprise surveillance check. Safety inspectors commonly complain about not being

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able to “kick the tires” or otherwise closely scrutinize inspection work done in far-flung locations.

The number of foreign repair stations hired to service American planes more than doubled, to 731, from 2004 to 2009. There have been alarming revelations: the Department of Transportation reported the discovery in 2003 of a worker with ties to Al Qaeda at an overseas repair station. In 2005, immigration agents arrested 27 undocumented immigrants working at a North Carolina shop that airlines had contracted for repair work.

Worse, testifying before Congress in 2007, the inspector general of the Department of Transportation, Calvin Scovel III, described instances in which repair work has been contracted out by subcontractors to uncertified shops and unlicensed mechanics. These phantom shops sometimes consist of a sole mechanic who works from the back of a truck; in 2009 testimony, Mr. Scovel told Congress that the F.A.A. had no knowledge that critical work, including jet engine replacement, had been done in shops that had been sub-subcontracted. Though drug and alcohol testing is standard for all mechanics who service planes in the United States, a Senate committee found that some overseas repair shops don't bother with such testing.

Southwest's near-disaster last week was the latest in a series of problems caused by metal fatigue. There was a similar incident on a Southwest flight in 2009 and one involving an American Airlines Boeing 757 last year. Most chillingly, in 1988 a flight attendant was sucked out of an 18-foot hole in an Aloha Airlines plane 24,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean.

After the rip in Southwest Flight 812's roof last week, the airline announced it would create additional inspection programs for its 737 fleet.

Now it's up to the safety board to determine if last week's events were due in part or in whole to Southwest's maintenance program and or to the aviation agency's oversight of that program.

The United States is justifiably proud of its commercial aviation safety record. But that record was built on hard work and forward thinking; cutbacks in the aviation agency's budget will make it difficult for commercial airlines to maintain that record.

Aviation safety transcends party politics. White-knuckle moments onboard stricken commercial airlines shed light on the dangers of unsupervised maintenance — particularly if that light is shining through a gaping hole in the fuselage of a Boeing 737.

Workers Compensation Benefits Program Now Available

The Teamsters Airline Division is happy to announce that it has secured access to a Workers' Compensation Benefits Program available to all members and their families. This Program is administered by Barkan Meizlish, LLP, which provides high-quality, legal representation in workers compensation cases across the country. Under this program, all Teamsters and their family members automatically qualify for discounted workers compensation legal services.

As part of a nationwide network of workers' compensation attorneys, Barkan Meizlish either represents employees directly in their workers compensation cases, or coordinates with attorneys in an employee's area to ensure that the same high-quality, legal representation is provided. Discounted legal services rates apply regardless of your place of residence, craft and occupation, or whether your case is handled directly by Barkan Meizlish or in coordination with local counsel.

This Program is particularly important for pilots, flight attendants and mechanics performing field service, who, like ground transportation employees, are often faced with complex decisions about where to file a claim given that their residence, base and location of injury. Rules regarding statutes of limitations, caps on benefits and access to medical care vary from state to state. In some states, compensation may be sought for the loss of earnings, prescriptions, medical fees, therapy, care and assistance for household chores, traveling expenses, adapted transportation and vocational assistance.

Barkan Meizlish can provide guidance about where to file a claim so the injured worker can focus on recovery, rather than becoming involved in a lengthy quest to determine which state offers the best benefits.

Teamsters and their family members who experience a work related injury or sickness can contact a Barkan Meizlish attorney by calling 1-800-274-5297 or by visiting www.barkanmeizlish.com.