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October 1, 2018

Vote YES on H.R. 302, FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), I write in support of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R. 302, as amended). The bill reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for five years, providing renewed investment in and stability to our national aviation system.

H.R. 302 makes improvements to aviation safety by advancing policy reforms that protect frontline workers and passengers. This includes the provision that extends the flight attendant mandatory minimum rest period from the current minimum of 8 hours rest to 10 hours rest, guaranteeing flight attendants an additional two hours of downtime between duty periods. This improvement provides much-needed and deserved parity with the existing minimum rest standards for flight deck crews.

The measure also bans in-flight cell phone voice calls, requires regulation of service animals and emotional support animals, calls for a study assessing the health effects of bleed air, which is making flight attendants and passengers ill, and creates a task force to combat in-flight sexual misconduct by passengers. Further, we are pleased that the bill helps mitigate assault of customer service agents and renews the Essential Air Service program that supports air service to small communities, among other positive provisions.

However, we are disappointed by the inclusion of the provision that seeks to make Repairman certificates portable between aircraft maintenance facilities. This change would undermine safety by failing to ensure that Repairmen receive the training and have the skills they need to repair U.S. aircraft properly and safely. The TWU supports maintaining the existing high standards required of aviation maintenance workers, and we will continue fighting to keep them in place.

Despite that provision, this bill does take major steps forward to improve the safety of frontline workers and aviation passengers. We commend the leadership of Reps. Shuster, DeFazio, LoBiondo, and Larsen, and Senators Thune, Nelson, Blunt, and Cantwell, for producing a bipartisan bill, and we encourage you to vote Yes on H.R. 302 when it comes for a vote.

Sincerely,

John Samuelson
International President