Federal policy fails to apply identical safety and security rules on all aircraft repair stations. Over 700 foreign-based aircraft repair stations are certified by the FAA to work on U.S. aircraft, but federal oversight and testing is insufficient because overseas repair stations do not have to meet the same high standards as domestic aircraft repair facilities.

In 2003, the U.S. Department of Transportation Inspector General called on the FAA to require drug testing of foreign repair station workers in order to receive FAA certification.

The 2012 FAA Reauthorization included a provision requiring the agency to issue a drug and alcohol testing rule for foreign repair station workers who perform safety sensitive duties. Due in February of 2013, the FAA is now three years late in issuing this rule.

U.S. air carriers contract out 70 percent of aircraft maintenance. This outsourced work, much of it performed overseas, should be held to the same safety standards as maintenance performed in the U.S.

Not only are employees at foreign repair stations not tested for substance abuse, the required annual visit by the FAA is scheduled in advance. This gives the non-compliant facilities plenty of time to correct operational issues temporarily.

All employees working on aircraft should meet the same training and oversight requirements regardless of their employer or the nation in which they work.

One of the few exceptions to the outsourcing trend is American Airlines, which performs heavy maintenance work in Tulsa, Oklahoma. TWU represents thousands of these workers.

TWU supports provisions in the 2016 House FAA Reauthorization, the “AIRR Act” that: 1) Prioritize risk-based oversight on foreign repair stations, letting FAA look harder at stations with problems, 2) Give the FAA access to airline data on corrective actions and heavy maintenance, and 3) Create background checks for foreign workers in safety sensitive jobs.

The FAA Reauthorization should prohibit the additional certification of any foreign repair station until the drug and alcohol rule is implemented.

The FAA Reauthorization should also mandate the use of unannounced inspections at both foreign and U.S. stations. Such standards are already in effect for domestic maintenance facilities.