



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Committee Members:

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) and millions of taxpayers nationwide, we write regarding the recent push to reform the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and plans therein to separate out Air Traffic Control (ATC) functions into a separate, non-profit entity.

ATR supports and encourages efforts to increase government efficiency so long as the resulting reforms benefit American taxpayers and the traveling public.

Increasing the efficiency with which the federal government operates is a laudable goal, and a goal that ATR supports. **However, we would urge you to do so in a manner that ensures Americans are shielded from potential increases in user fees or even taxes.**

The 2016 ATC reform proposal put forth by the Committee was particularly concerning with regard to the potential for the traveling public and American taxpayers to be subjected to increased economic and financial burdens. Provisions in the 2016 reform proposal would have exempted certain FAA functions from congressional oversight. Doing so could decrease the level of accountability to the public for actions taken by the new entity.

In a recent letter to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune, a bipartisan group of Senate appropriations leaders expressed similar concerns. The letter states, "The annual appropriations process provides the oversight of agency resources necessary to ensure accountability for program performance" and, "the public would not be well-served by exempting any part of the FAA from congressional oversight."

It is also concerning that a number of concessions were made in the 2016 proposal in order to appease union interests. We worry that removing the unionized ATC employees from the federal salary cap would result in runaway labor costs. In addition, removing them from the current legal prohibition against striking could prove a grave threat to national security, as President Ronald Reagan demonstrated so memorably in his first term.

While ATR supports the goal of reducing the size of government and increasing the efficiency with which it operates, it also remains our goal to ensure that any ATC reform proposals put forth not only improve the status quo, but protect the American taxpayer and traveling public.

Sincerely,

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