

AFGE Local 200 Talking Points

- AFGE opposes proposals to privatize the Air Traffic Control function (ATC) at the FAA.
- AFGE represents FAA workers in New Jersey and Oklahoma.
- There is far more than one union at FAA. Besides AFGE, AFSCME, LIUNA, NAGE, NFFE, PAACE and PASS represent FAA workers.
- There is no good reason to privatize ATC functions. FAA's ATC functions oversee the largest aviation system in the world, including flights that carry over 2 million passengers each day on 65,000 flights. There is no comparison between the numbers of flights, airports and passengers managed by the FAA and those in countries with private aviation systems.
- The ATC functions necessary to maintain the high level of aviation safety in the U.S. aviation. The U.S. military also relies on the FAA. It is unclear how the Department of Defense would interact with air traffic control provided by a private corporation.
- Privatization proposals leave many unanswered questions for FAA workers:
 - Will the FAA workforce remain federal employees?
 - Will collective bargaining agreements remain in effect? Will unions representing FAA employees be subjected to another election for employees they already represent?
 - Will union officials be granted official time for representational duties under privatization?
 - Will the FAA workforce maintain federal retirement programs (CSRS and FERS)?
 - What health benefits will be available to the FAA workforce? Will they be covered under FEHBP?
 - Will the FAA workforce maintain current pay systems or a guarantee that current wages will be maintained?
 - Will the FAA workforce maintain protection from liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act?
 - What about new hires? AFGE opposes a plan resulting in a two-tier system of wages and benefits for current FAA workers vs. new hires.
- The FAA reauthorization bill introduced by T&I Chairman Bill Shuster during the last Congress included a corporate board that was dominated by airlines. Interest including general aviation, communities and other unions representing the FAA workforce should have a seat at the table when discussing aviation safety. ATC privatization proposals give the aviation industry unprecedented operational control over the nation's aviation system.
- The history of unstable FAA funding is not resolved by privatization:
 - In 2011 the partial shutdown resulted in a loss of \$30 million per day in airline ticket taxes.
 - 2013 sequester cuts were only circumvented by Congressional action on FAA budget flexibility.
 - FAA may face additional cuts, including a cut of \$100 million to FAA capital funds in the FY16 House THUD Appropriations bill.
- Countries such as Canada and England that have privatized ATC functions are not comparable to the US. There are far fewer airports and flights and geographically a smaller area to monitor. In addition, "private" ATC corporations in those countries have required a government "bailout" due to funding issues.

- Privatization proposals would result in even more uncertain funding for ATC functions. Privatization would direct amounts from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund to pay for ATC and procurement. Yet, aviation taxes have not kept up with ATC function demands. A future economic downturn or even threatened aviation terrorism can diminish trust fund proceeds.
- There is no consensus in Congress or among the aviation industry that privatization is the best solution to the FAA's problems:
 - The Senate FY16 THUD report language rejected the idea that the ATC should be taken out of the FAA and made exempt from the appropriations process.
 - The Senate Committee Appropriations again expressed bipartisan concerns about effort to privatize FAA ATC functions in a February 28, 2017 letter to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
 - Over 100 mayors of smaller communities signed a letter expressing concerns about the service their cities would receive from a privatized ATC corporations, and the costs.
 - The National Business Aviation Association opposes privatization.
 - The Alliance for Aviation Across America, National Farmers Union and the League of Rural Voters oppose privatization because rural airports and communities face cuts in service.
 - The Airport Owners and Pilots Association opposes the use of user fees for general aviation.
 - Delta Airlines opposes privatization, voicing concern about funding ATO from user fees, retention and treatment of the current workforce, and lack of Congressional oversight.