

LAURA MILLER

MAYOR



CITY OF DALLAS

TESTIMONY

OF

**THE HONORABLE LAURA MILLER
MAYOR
CITY OF DALLAS**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

COMMITTEE

ON

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 12, 2006

Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Costello and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the agreement reached by the City of Dallas, the City of Fort Worth, the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Board, Southwest Airlines and American Airlines (the five parties). Much like the agreement that led to the creation of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport 32 years ago, this agreement represents the best in regional cooperation and signals that, whatever our past differences over Love Field, the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth are committed to working together on behalf of our region's future. The five-party agreement as approved by the Dallas City Council is attached to my testimony. Each of the five parties represented here will address different aspects of it.

Before I proceed with my testimony, I would like to thank the entire North Central Texas delegation for their work on this issue and for their encouragement and support as we addressed this issue locally. I would particularly like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank two members of this Subcommittee, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson and Representative Kenny Marchant, for their leadership on this issue and for all of their hard work on behalf of Dallas. And I would be remiss if I did not thank my good friend and partner, Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief, for his leadership and for his dedication to regional planning and cooperation. Both of us benefited from the help and support of our business community and I am very grateful to them as well.

Four months ago our Congressional delegation asked us to find a local solution to the problems arising out of the Wright Amendment. The problems surrounding this issue are complex and the interests are in many cases entrenched. The rift between the two cities for too long has kept the fifth largest metropolitan area in America from developing its full economic potential; it was important that we address this issue head on.

After strenuous negotiations, the five parties reached an agreement that will also serve the interests of our regional economy, the traveling public and the Dallas citizens who live near Love Field. There are those who argue that the five-party agreement goes too far and others who say that it does not go far enough. However, any agreement between these five parties that also has the support of the communities neighboring Love Field and the business community must have gotten it mostly right. Erle Nye, President of the Chamber of Commerce, has been deeply involved and fully supportive of the whole process. The Love Field Citizen's Action Committee has written letters expressing their support for the five-party agreement to Chairman Young and Ranking Member Oberstar of the full Committee and I would ask that those letters be entered into the record as part of my testimony.

This landmark agreement will gradually open Love Field to allow direct, non-stop flights to and from cities throughout the United States in a manner that protects surrounding neighborhoods from increased noise, traffic and pollution

and in a manner that allows Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to cement its lead role in our regional economy. If implemented, it will increase competition and improve airline service for the 5.3 million people who call our region home and for the thousands of travelers who visit us each year.

The five-party agreement will free Love Field from almost 30 years of federal control. As importantly, it will allow Dallas to move forward in updating the Love Field Master Plan. That plan as approved in 2001 assumed that Love Field would be forever subject to the Wright Amendment and could eventually develop up to 32 gates. A more recent study performed by our master plan consultants evaluated the community impacts of the plan for a post-Wright Amendment environment. They concluded that the master plan goals can be fully implemented under the 20-gate limit set by the five-party agreement. In addition to maintaining the ground traffic, noise and air quality impacts of the air service that 32 gates with the Wright Amendment would bring, the 20-gate limit without the Wright Amendment will also enhance safety and efficiency.

A few airlines have complained that the five-party agreement would bar new carriers from Love Field. Not so. There will be room for new entrant airlines and for new service to other destinations from our airport – now and after the airport is reconfigured. Today, our 19 gates currently in use are not at capacity. New entrants are welcome under Dallas's existing sharing provisions, which will not change under this agreement.

Under this new agreement, travelers using a 20-gate Love Field will also benefit from a much improved airport. As part of the five-party agreement, the City of Dallas has agreed to invest between \$150 million and \$200 million for a wide variety of upgrades at Love Field consistent with the Love Field Master Plan, to be funded through landing fees, space rental charges and Passenger Facility Charges. These investments will improve operations, increase safety, improve the traveler's experience and boost the airport's bottom line. These investments include two components to address safety issues:

- Adding 1000 feet to the Runway Safety Areas off the north ends of Love Field's two parallel runways in order to bring them into compliance with federal requirements and
- Building a new, \$8 million public safety and crisis management facility that will enhance security and emergency response by combining the administrative functions of the Dallas Airport Police, Dallas Fire and Rescue, Airport Operations and the Controlled Access Security System in a facility separate from the Main Terminal Building.

In addition, under the five-party agreement, the City of Dallas is committed to other improvements at Love Field, including expansion of retail concessions (\$4 million), renovation of the central lobby (\$20 million), a new cargo building (\$6 million), renovation of the intersection of Mockingbird Lane and Cedar Springs Road at the airport entrance (\$20 million), a new ticket wing and

pedestrian bridge (\$34 million), renovation of the concourse (\$70 million) and landscaping (\$10 million).

In addition to those improvements, the City will fund any construction, renovation or demolition work related to limiting operations at Love Field to 20 gates and will explore construction of a people mover to directly connect the terminal at Love Field with a planned station along the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Northwest Light Rail Line one mile west of the airport.

Mr. Chairman, this landmark agreement represents the best in regional cooperation. It will improve service for the flying public, improve safety and efficiency at Love Field in a manner that minimizes impacts on adjacent neighborhoods and cement Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport as the hub of our regional economy. We need your help to make it happen and I urge Congress to enact implementing legislation as quickly as possible. Thank you again for your interest in this important issue and for the opportunity to testify in favor of the five-party agreement.