



TESTIMONY

OF

THE HONORABLE MIKE MONCRIEF
MAYOR
CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

COMMITTEE
ON
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 12, 2006

Chairman Mica, and members of the Aviation Subcommittee: It is indeed an honor to appear before you as mayor of one of the fastest growing large cities in our nation—Fort Worth, Texas.

Let me first say that I fully understand your time is valuable. I will be brief. We deeply respect the jobs you do, and we thank you for giving us a forum to discuss the significance of this local agreement. The debate over the Wright Amendment has been long and turbulent; with passionate arguments on all sides. It goes without saying that I'm delighted to be here in support of a proposal that would settle this local issue, which has at times divided a region.

I am most appreciative of my colleague and friend, Dallas Mayor Laura Miller, for her partnership during this process. (Of course there were times when we would have to agree to disagree.) But in the end, I am proud that our two cities worked jointly toward what was best for our citizens, the flying public, the airlines, and our airports. We also owe a great deal of gratitude to the leadership of Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, American Airlines, and Southwest Airlines for their willingness to chart a new path.

I especially want to thank Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison who, along with Senator John Cornyn, urged us to forge this compromise. I also want to thank Chairman Joe Barton, Representatives Kay Granger, Michael Burgess, Eddie Bernice Johnson, and the rest of our North Texas delegation for their support. Although our target was elusive, I believe

we produced what we were asked to construct by our Congressional leaders: A local solution to a local problem.

In my years of public service, I have never been involved in more intense, challenging, and non-stop negotiations. Each of us spent countless hours, days, weeks, and months cussing and discussing pros and cons. Our compromise is an example of what happens when everyone shares in the pain to make something significant take place. All parties involved have, what I like to say – “some skin in the game.”

Sometimes the best decisions are ones where no one really gets everything they want, but rather where everyone walks away at least feeling that the greater good has been served. Our compromise is a case in point. Ultimately, we are presenting you with a fair and balanced product. It is an agreement that—as Mayor—I can represent to you the leaders of Fort Worth firmly stand behind.

This is bigger than two cities, two airlines, or two airports. This settlement affects thousands of families, and it affects businesses large and small alike. This plan has enormous implications for the Dallas/Fort Worth regional economy (one of the largest in the world) as it will protect countless local jobs and preserve the future of our Metroplex.

Our agreement is predicated upon the condition that Congress will enact legislation to implement both the terms and spirit of our proposal. While we are proud of our accomplishments thus far, it will be for naught if Congress alters or fails to adopt this

compromise as presented. We understand the difficult task ahead of you, and we are counting on you to put an end to this debate—for good.

If we all do our jobs, the provisions of this local agreement will be adopted as federal law and we will have a binding contract between all parties. Our local city councils and this Congress can move on to other important issues, and this very difficult challenge will not be left at the feet of future leaders.

If we do our jobs, the largest airline in the world – American, and the largest domestic air carrier in the United States – Southwest can focus their energy on competing in the air, not in the halls of Congress. They can stop spending money on lawyers, lobbyists, and campaign-style advertisements.

If we do our jobs, Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, our region’s most important economic engine and job creator, can continue being a gateway to the world. All Americans – your constituents and ours – will ultimately be free to fly anywhere in the United States, and they can realize a future filled with healthy airline competition that will lead to more competitive airfares.

However, should Congress fail to carry through this local compromise, sadly but certainly, everyone, including the public—our citizens, will lose.

By our presence today, we—the parties to this agreement—affirm our approval of this local solution that was negotiated in the best interest of the citizens and economies of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. We urge your strong support of our legislative proposal without amendments. Thank you for your time and consideration.