



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**Don Young**  
**Chairman**

June 6, 2006

**James L. Oberstar**  
**Ranking Democratic Member**

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff  
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

**SUPPORT THE LATOURETTE BILL (H.R. 5449)**

Dear Colleague:

This week, under Suspension of the Rules, the House will consider H.R. 5449, introduced by Cong. Steve LaTourette, which ensures that the bargaining rights of air traffic controllers and other Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees are protected and in line with other federal workers. ***As the Ranking Democratic Member of the committee of jurisdiction over this bill, I urge you to support H.R. 5449 when it comes to the Floor.***

The FAA recently declared an impasse in bargaining with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association and submitted its final offer to Congress. Yesterday, the FAA announced that it intends to unilaterally implement this offer. I do not believe that Congress is the proper venue to settle collective bargaining disputes, nor do I think it is right to allow the FAA to simply impose a contract on its workers. This process is inherently unfair and has created a significant level of acrimony and distrust among all FAA employees.

H.R. 5449 addresses this problem in a clear and reasonable fashion. Current law allows the FAA to resolve collective bargaining disputes through the Federal Services Impasses Panel (FSIP). The FAA argues that another provision of law overrules the FSIP provision and gives the FAA the right to unilaterally impose its contract terms. H.R. 5449 will make it clear that labor-management disputes are governed by the provision of law authorizing FSIP to resolve the dispute. Under the LaTourette bill, the parties would return to the bargaining table and, if a settlement could not be reached, the FSIP would have jurisdiction to resolve the dispute, including the power to impose binding arbitration on the parties.

Other federal workers have access to binding arbitration through FSIP to settle disputes; FAA workers should not be excluded from this process. In fact, the FSIP arbitration procedure was recently used to settle several issues regarding pay for the Security and Exchange Commission and its employees.

Under H.R. 5449, air traffic controllers and other FAA employees would still be barred from striking.

Again, I urge you to vote for H.R. 5449. It represents a fair and reasonable compromise and ensures that our air traffic controllers will continue to be focused on moving thousands of aircraft and millions of travelers safely and efficiently every day.

Sincerely,

  
James L. Oberstar  
Ranking Democratic Member