

Dissenting Views on Air Traffic Control Privatization

**From: The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
- Minority Staff**

Bill: H.R. 4441

Date: 3/1/2016

Dear Democratic Colleague:

Two weeks ago, a divided Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure marked up H.R. 4441, the “Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization Act of 2016” (AIRR Act), a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that would privatize the Nation’s air traffic control (ATC) system and hand it over to private special interests for free. During the Committee markup, the bill faced bipartisan opposition, with all Democrats and two Republicans voting against the legislation. Our [Dissenting Views](#), which we plan to include in the Committee’s report on this controversial legislation, outline some of the major Democratic objections in more detail.

The AIRR Act jeopardizes aviation safety by splitting the FAA in two and leaving safety programs and more than 7,400 FAA safety employees vulnerable to Congressional budget cuts and shutdowns. It also severs ties between the Department of Defense and the ATC system, which have protected the American public during national emergencies.

To make matters worse, the privately-held, industry-controlled ATC Corporation that the bill creates would be too big and too critical to fail. The American public would be required to bail out the corporation if it were to default. Even Robert Poole, a longtime advocate of privatization, testified before the Committee on February 10, 2016, that, in that event, “customers would have to pay more”.

The AIRR Act gives the corporation an unprecedented power to tax American consumers to pay for the ATC system. The corporation would determine navigational routes and could disregard the effects of aircraft noise and pollution. It could also make decisions that jeopardize access for aviation users in small and rural communities.

Since it was first introduced, the AIRR Act has been mired in controversy. The bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations have stated their opposition to the bill. The Air Line Pilots Association, Delta Air Lines, multiple general aviation stakeholders, major consumer groups, both progressive and conservative coalitions, and other stakeholders oppose it.

We encourage you to carefully consider our concerns and contact the Subcommittee on Aviation Democratic staff if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

PETER DeFAZIO

Ranking Member

RICK LARSEN

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Aviation
