



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST PILOTS UNION | WWW.ALPA.ORG

May 26, 2021

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the nearly 60,000 professional pilots represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 3095, the Fair and Open Skies Act. This bipartisan bill was introduced by Representatives Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Rodney Davis (R-IL), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Drew Ferguson (R-GA), Sharice Davids (D-KS), Don Bacon (R-NE), Kai Kahele (D-HI), Jack Bergman (R-MI), Connor Lamb (D-PA), and Bill Johnson (R-OH). This bill protects fair competition for U.S. airlines, airline pilots, and other airline workers by enabling the Department of Transportation (DOT) to prohibit unscrupulous business practices by foreign airlines.

One such business practice is “flag of convenience,” in which a company, such as an airline, bases aspects of its business in different countries around the globe to take advantage of more lenient labor, tax, and regulatory laws.

H.R. 3095 will ensure that foreign airlines flying to the United States are held to the same standard of competition as U.S. air carriers flying internationally by requiring the DOT to apply a multifactor public-interest test to foreign air carrier permit applications. In addition, EU airlines applying for foreign air carrier permits will be required to comply with the labor conditions of the U.S.–EU Open Skies Agreement. This will help restore integrity to our international aviation trade agreements. When these agreements are properly enforced, as provided for in the Fair and Open Skies Act, expanded market opportunities benefit workers, consumers, airlines, and nation states.

We have seen this business model destroy one American industry already. In 1955, U.S.-flagged ships carried 25 percent of the world’s maritime shipping tonnage on more than 1,000 vessels. Those ships directly employed thousands of Americans who sailed around the world in our merchant marine. Today, after flags of convenience have come to dominate the world’s shipping lanes, our merchant marine has been reduced to just 167 ships carrying 2 percent of the world’s tonnage (largely on inland waterways).

International operations at U.S. airlines contribute more than \$95 billion per year to our economy and directly employ more than 150,000 workers. Every one of those jobs is at risk should the flag-of-convenience business model proliferate in the airline industry as it has in maritime shipping. Additionally, the loss of our international routes would cause a domino effect throughout the domestic air network. Typically, hundreds of thousands of passengers on domestic flights connect onto international flights every year. Should those international routes disappear, U.S. carriers will be forced to reduce or eliminate service to small- and mid-size communities throughout the country, destroying thousands more jobs.

The Fair and Open Skies Act is identical to what was introduced in the 116th Congress, and as before, this legislation simply clarifies that DOT must conduct a public-interest test to assess whether a foreign air carrier is a flag of convenience or otherwise undermines labor standards. This is a straightforward, no-nonsense, pro-fair competition means to provide DOT with the appropriate protocols to determine which new foreign airlines should fly to the United States, while ensuring a level playing field and keeping our skies safe.

Stand up and enforce our trade agreements by cosponsoring H.R. 3095 today!

Please contact Michael Tien with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff to be added as a cosponsor: michael.tien@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph G. DePete".

Captain Joseph G. DePete
President