



# AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

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

1625 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036 • 703-689-2270 • 888-FLY-ALPA

March 25, 2014

The Honorable John Carter  
Chairman, Homeland Security Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David E. Price  
Ranking Member, Homeland Security Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Price:

On behalf of the 50,000 professional airline pilots represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I write in support of targeted changes to amend section 564 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (H.R. 3547) in the Fiscal Year 2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill. This language would provide specific guidelines for the establishment of all future Customs and Border Protection preclearance facilities.

In February 2014, despite substantial opposition from Congress and airline industry stakeholders, including ALPA, a preclearance facility opened at Abu Dhabi International Airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This new facility is the first expansion of the program since 1986, the first such facility in the Persian Gulf, and the first to utilize a reimbursement arrangement under which a foreign country will pay a portion of a U.S. homeland security responsibility. The stated purpose for establishing the facility was to increase security and cooperation between the U.S. and the UAE. While we wholeheartedly support enhancing aviation security, other means exist to achieve this goal without harming the U.S. airline industry.

ALPA firmly believes that, as a matter of policy, the goal of the U.S. government's customs preclearance program should be to benefit U.S. passengers and U.S. air carriers. U.S. taxpayers' money should not be used to give an unfair advantage to foreign airlines.

Currently, the U.S. operates 15 preclearance locations at airports in Canada, Ireland, and the Caribbean, not including Abu Dhabi. Each of these airports is served by at least one U.S. airline. U.S. airlines transport a majority of the passengers who are cleared through these

locations into the U.S. The program's benefit is clear for both U.S. airline passengers and the U.S. airline industry -- an industry which helps drive the nation's economy by contributing nearly 10 million U.S. jobs and \$1 trillion in annual economic activity.

In stark contrast, the new customs preclearance facility located in Abu Dhabi sets an alarming precedent: it is the first airport in the world to receive a U.S. customs preclearance facility that solely benefits a foreign airline. The idea of our government using U.S. taxpayers' money in a way that helps foreign airlines to better compete against U.S. companies is an affront in its own right, but consider as well that this airline is state-supported and already operates with a significant advantage in the global marketplace.

ALPA supports the inclusion of language in the Fiscal Year 2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill to establish a minimum threshold of U.S. airline departures from an international airport before that airport could be considered for a preclearance facility.

ALPA is opposed to government policies that provide unfair, competitive advantages to foreign airlines that directly compete with U.S. airlines. This language would set clear guidelines to ensure prudent use of American taxpayer dollars while also benefitting U.S. air travelers and protecting American jobs.

We look forward to working with you during this year's annual appropriations process and we urge you to protect the U.S. airline industry and its workers by including this important provision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Lee Moak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lee Moak  
President, Air Line Pilots Association, International

CC: The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman  
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member  
Homeland Security Subcommittee Members