



For Immediate Release

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NATCA APPLAUDS INCLUSION OF CHAIRMAN GRAVES'S AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SECTION IN BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(WASHINGTON) – The National Air Traffic Control Association (NATCA) thanks House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves for his leadership in passing an Air Traffic Control (ATC) section in the budget reconciliation package. This section will significantly improve the safety and efficiency of the National Airspace System for the flying public, users of the system, and the air traffic controllers and other aviation safety professionals who operate the system 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year.

NATCA, as an active member of the Modern Skies Coalition, joined with more than 50 industry stakeholders to recognize our shared priorities of improving controller staffing and modernizing the ATC system. NATCA signed onto the coalition letter endorsing the ATC modernization provisions in the budget reconciliation package.

NATCA has been raising public awareness of the ATC staffing shortage for more than a decade. We were very encouraged by the provisions contained in the bipartisan FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, which made significant improvements to controller hiring and training. Chairman Graves's provisions in the budget reconciliation bill provide for a significant increase in funding for recruiting, retaining, and training controllers. These two bills will complement each other, contributing to a more comprehensive and sustainable staffing strategy that includes hiring, training, and retention.

NATCA also has voiced concerns about the age of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) physical infrastructure and its need for equipment modernization. Chairman Graves's provisions provide a significant downpayment toward the investments will be needed to fully modernize the FAA's facilities and equipment.

We applaud Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy and the Administration for their commitment to supercharged controller hiring and resolving the staffing shortage, along with the Secretary's visionary plan to modernize the National Airspace System. We look forward to working with Secretary Duffy, the Department of Transportation, the FAA, and members of Congress to implement these and other important advancements in the coming years.

NATCA was also pleased that U.S. House of Representatives leadership exempted air traffic controllers from the changes to federal employee retirement contained in the reconciliation bill. It is universally recognized that the FAA is roughly 3,600 fully certified controllers short of what it needs, and changes to their retirement would have hurt with both retention of current controllers and recruitment of the workforce of the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) is a labor union and aviation safety organization in the United States that represents nearly 20,000 highly skilled air traffic controllers, engineers, and other aviation safety-related professionals. NATCA was certified in 1987 by the Federal Labor Relations Authority to be the exclusive bargaining representative for air traffic controllers employed by the Federal Aviation Administration. Today, NATCA is one of the strongest labor unions in the federal sector and represents a range of aviation safety professionals in 15 FAA bargaining units, five Department of Defense air traffic facilities, and 123 federal contract towers. These air traffic controllers and other aviation safety professionals make vital contributions to the U.S. economy and make modern life possible by coordinating the safe, orderly, and expeditious movement of one billion aviation passengers and millions of tons of freight within the National Airspace System each year. NATCA is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.