



**U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Washington, DC 20515**

**Don Young  
Chairman**

**James L. Oberstar  
Ranking Democratic Member**

September 8, 2003

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**DO NOT FORGET THE MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE OF THE  
FEDERAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

**VOTE "NO" ON H.R. 2115, THE FAA REAUTHORIZATION CONFERENCE REPORT,  
WHICH WOULD ALLOW AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TO BE REPLACED  
BY PRIVATE CONTRACT EMPLOYEES**

Dear Colleague:

On November 1, 2001, Secretary of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta presented the U.S. Department of Transportation's highest award for achievement to the nation's air traffic controllers, in recognition of the controllers' response to the events of September 11. The Secretary stated:

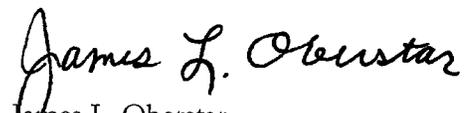
On September 11, [the controllers] responded to a challenge that was unprecedented in the history of their industry. On that day, I made a determination that the safest way to prevent any more attacks was to ground the entire aviation system. Immediately the air traffic controllers went to work to land thousands of aircraft at the nearest airport. In a matter of hours, every aircraft was down safely. I believe the phenomenal performance of the air traffic controllers in carrying out my direction saved lives on that terrible day, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for that.

Some of you may have seen the pictures of the hundreds of commercial aircraft lined up at small airports like they were on a deck of an aircraft carrier. All over America -- and in Canada -- people were brought down safely, and one law enforcement leader after another has said that further hijackings were prevented that day.

It is inconceivable that two years after this magnificent achievement the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would be trying to replace hundreds, and possibly thousands, of controllers with low-bid contract employees. The FAA Reauthorization Conference Report (H.R. 2115) allows the FAA to immediately replace air traffic controllers at 69 towers, including 11 of the busiest 50 towers in the nation. In addition, the FAA Reauthorization Conference Report allows the FAA to privatize the entire air traffic control system beginning in 2007.

Vote "No" and let FAA know that we do not want to start down the road of dismantling the system that served us so well on September 11, 2001.

Sincerely,

  
James L. Oberstar  
Ranking Democratic Member