



August 20, 2018

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

On behalf of more than 160,000 pilots and flight attendants who fly for U.S. air carriers, we want to convey our strong support for Section 530 of H.R. 4, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018.

Section 530 addresses flag-of-convenience schemes that enable companies to skirt tax, labor, and safety standards. This language requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct a public interest analysis before awarding a foreign air carrier permit. Among the policy objectives that DOT is to seek to achieve when determining whether proposed foreign air transportation is in the public interest is the encouragement of “fair wages and working conditions.” 49 U.S.C. § 40101(a)(5). Another objective is “strengthening the competitive position of [U.S.] air carriers to at least ensure equality with foreign air carriers.” 49 U.S.C. §§ 40101(a)(15) and (e)(1).

We’ve seen before how flag-of-convenience schemes can decimate a U.S. industry. In 1955, U.S. maritime vessels carried 25 percent of the world’s tonnage. Today, following the rise of the flag-of-convenience model in international shipping, the U.S. maritime industry accounts for just 2 percent of world tonnage. U.S. seafaring jobs on those ships have plummeted by 87 percent as a result. Section 530 is necessary to preserve our U.S. airline industry, which directly employs nearly 700,000 people across the United States.

On behalf of these workers and their families, we urge you to include Section 530 in the final FAA reauthorization bill.

Sincerely,

Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA)

Captain Tim Canoll, president of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA)

Captain Dan Carey, president of the Allied Pilots Association (APA)

Lori Bassani, president of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA)

Captain Lee Collins, president of the Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations (CAPA)

Captain Robert Travis, president of the Independent Pilots Association (IPA)

First Officer Pedro Leroux, president of the NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots (NJASAP)

Captain Jon Weaks, president of the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA)

Captain Josh LeBlanc, president of Teamsters Local 357

Captain Daniel Wells, president of Teamsters Local 1224