



August 15, 2017

CALL TO ACTION TO OPPOSE HR2997—AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PRIVATIZATION IS AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO GENERAL AVIATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Dear Members and Supporters:

With a sense of urgency, I'm reaching out as the PNBAA's President, to encourage all of our members to contact Congressional Representatives and voice opposition to HR 2997, the proposed measure to privatize the country's Air Traffic Control System. This House vote is slated for September.

The 21st Century AIRR Act, otherwise known as HR 2997, poses a very serious threat to General Aviation as the bill advocates a shift of ATC oversight away from Congress; to be replaced by a private corporation whose leadership will be dominated by commercial interests whose objectives do not align with Business or General Aviation. If HR 2997 is enacted, Congress will hand our public ATC infrastructure, highly regarded as the largest and safest ATC system in the world (a public investment of over \$20 billion), to a private entity run by an appointed Board of Directors. It is the composition of this Board that represents the threat: 8 of the 13 seats (61%) will be controlled by commercial interests, virtually assuring that the ATC will operationally disadvantage all of General Aviation for the benefit of Commercial Aviation. That commercial-based leadership has repeatedly stated aims to dominate control to access of the American airspace, and shift funding of ATC onto General Aviation users.

As experts and stakeholders in Business Aviation and voters who dictate the composition of our Congressional representation, we must all personally reach out to our elected Representatives to inform them of the dangers of HR 2997. The time for this outreach is now.

As a component of President Trump's infrastructure revitalization plan, HR 2997 appeals to frustration of Congress' pattern of short-term funding extensions for the current FAA managed ATC. Despite the fact that ATC is in the midst of a \$35 billion investment to the NextGen system (which is currently on-plan to be completed by 2030, and is within budget), the Bill will reduce the FAA's role in ATC to only matters of safety, while shifting operational duties to a newly formed private Corporation. **It is the proposed leadership of the private Corporation that is problematic.** It would shift oversight of the ATC away from the Congress' fair representation and hand control to a select few decision makers who have a commercial conflict of interest. Again, those with the commercial conflict of interest have historically stated their intentions to "control the airspace" and "shift funding requirements onto General Aviation".

Privatization of American ATC poses three significant risks to our industry: Airspace will not be equitably shared; ATC funding requirements (measured in the billions of dollars) will be shifted away from commercial-based sources and onto the shoulders of General Aviation; and there are matters of safety that must be considered when the FAA's role is substantially condensed and replaced with private industry.

Viability and Safety: Supporters of the Bill cite alleged success-stories of ATC privatization in both Canada and the UK, but fail to acknowledge that pressure over those two countries' airspace is merely a fraction of what is faced in the United States. Canada realizes around 33% of the annual volume of aircraft movement in the U.S., while the United Kingdom realizes less than 7% of American volumes. The magnitude and complexity of American ATC cannot be compared to these two



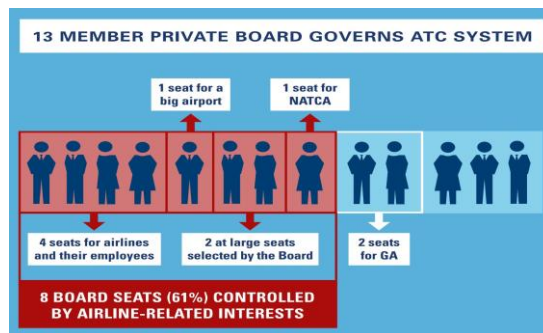
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countries. Further, the UK has already required bailout financing to remain viable; nowhere in HR 2997's Bill is the potential risk of ATC NewCo's financial failure addressed.

Under HR 2997 the FAA would be reduced in size, as it no longer would be responsible for management of ATC—it would only maintain its authority with regard to matters of safety. As tens of thousands of jobs are shifted out of FAA into the ATC NewCo, privatization will imperil FAA's current stable funding, and shift it to a reliance on future "General Fund" appropriations. Those appropriations are subject to politics, budget cuts, sequestration, and government shutdowns. It seems crazy to risk the stability and viability of this Authority to the unpredictable hand of "General Fund" appropriations and politics when the general public is wholly dependent on this Authority for all matters of safety. Doesn't it? Based on the fact that FAA ATC works very well today, exposure to these risks present potentially catastrophic risk in terms of public safety, and stability of Air Traffic Control in the United States. There truly seems to be nothing gained by HR 2997, while exposing all of us to significant safety risks.

Equitability of Funding, and ATC Oversight: It is a fact that 75% of all commercial-carrier activity in the United States is concentrated among our 30 busiest Airports. It should be assumed that an over-weighted commercialized Board will not be able, or willing, to ignore their dependence on these facilities which creates a conflict with all of General Aviation. ATC Privatization will leave the country lacking critical infrastructure as its leadership will focus only on the small segment of aviation that makes it money. That critical infrastructure means access to airspace, access to airfields and access to technological advancement. Thousands of airports & airfields, and the thousands that depend upon G.A. for their livelihood will no longer have an accessible conduit for representation on any matter relating to ATC. Today's fair representation, through Congressional channels, will shift to a Legal atmosphere where G.A. will have to go to a Court-of-Law to be heard. This would mean having to match the legal and financial resources of the biggest aviation interests in the world in order to have a voice. **For over 10 years, supporters of privatization have stated that one of their objectives was to "take control" of American airspace; HR 2997 provides a path to do this.**

Another stated objective of HR 2997 is to shift the funding away from ATC's current stable and predictable state. Currently, over 67% of the FAA's (and ATC) operation is funded by taxes and fees passed onto the airline consumer when plane tickets are purchased. Airlines don't like it as they claim that they are footing the bill. In reality, ATC funding comes from all of us air travelers who are footing the bill. Airline travel is a growing segment, and ATC fees have not affected this growth. Supporters of HR 2997 have, time and again, stated outright intention to shift away from today's ATC funding structure with the intention to drive much of the funding obligation to G.A. user-fees. **The shift in funding being discussed by HR 2997 proponents will undoubtedly negatively affect the PNBAA community, and the Business Aviation economy will most likely shrink in the future.**





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Call to Action: Never before has the General Aviation community come together as a unified voice like it has today in its opposition to HR 2997. I encourage you to take a little time to review the web site: www.atcnotforsale.com as a reference, and the resources made available by NBAA.

A PR campaign against the largest aviation companies in America is a challenge, so our most effective path of opposition is through those we elected to represent us in Washington D.C. There is a link to a written opposition statement on the top of this email that will allow you to quickly voice opposition to HR 2997. This will reach your representatives through an electronic correspondence, and this process takes less than a minute to complete. Please do this ASAP, but we need you to do more.

Also on this email is a number to call: **833-GAVoice** (833-428-6423). Here you enter your zip code, and your call is directed to your Congressional representatives' office. You can speak directly to the Representative's office, present yourself as a credible stakeholder, and advocate for opposition to HR 2997. If you have read this letter down to here, **you are informed enough to create a voice of opposition that will help guide a representative's stance on the issue. Please reach out personally and let them know why HR 2997 is a bad idea.**

Just like matters of national security and matters of national intelligence, the national airspace should be managed by those we elect, not by profiteers who see this as a chance to control the our airspace. The risks surrounding enactment of HR 2997 are massive; they come from unknown sources and present potentially catastrophic results. American Air Traffic Control is not broken, so why present our national airspace to such risk? **Do what you can to oppose HR 2997.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and your continued support of PNBAA.

Respectfully,

Jeff Roberts

PNBAA President