



## **Senate FAA Reauthorization Must Include Important Worker Provisions**

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, H.R. 4, which reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration for another five years. The final vote was 393-13 with a total of about \$4.35 billion per year allocated for the FAA. Currently, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee is reviewing the House language and expects to have a bill on the Senate floor in June with a long-term reauthorization in place by August.

Besides renewing funding, the House passed legislation also includes important provisions strongly supported by the Communications Workers of America. These provisions, flight attendant rest time and passenger service agent assault protection should also be included in the Senate FAA Reauthorization bill. CWA strongly urges the Senate to include the following House provisions in its bill.

### **FLIGHT ATTENDANT REST**

The Association of Flight Attendants, CWA (AFA), which represents 50,000 flight attendants at 20 airlines, supports the House requirement of 10 hours for flight attendant rest. (Currently, the Senate bill allows management to reduce the rest time to nine hours.) Flight Attendants' most important duties include responding to medical issues, inflight emergencies, and terrorism. Proper rest is needed to ensure these safety professionals can function at the highest level possible.

AFA's preferred compromised language is 10 hours rest for flight attendants, from release time until report, which cannot be reduced by either the company or by a flight attendant. This provision was based on the FAA and CAMI Flight Attendant Fatigue studies which confirmed that fatigue affects response time during emergency and evacuation duties. The CAMI studies revealed that 84% of flight attendants experienced fatigue. Ten hours rest is a minimal increase over current rest breaks and harmonizes rest with pilots.

### **PASSENGER SERVICE AGENT ASSAULT PROTECTION**

CWA, which represents 30,000 passenger service agents at American Airlines, Envoy and Piedmont, supports the House language which protects these workers from passenger assaults. (Currently, the Senate language calls for a GAO study on assault incidents and then requires carriers to submit plans on how to address these problems.) Passenger service agents play a vital role in ground operation including both "above the wing" – providing customer service to all passengers - and "below the wing" – loading planes and ensuring they are handled with care. These crucial workers report frequent incidents where they are verbally and physically assaulted while performing these responsibilities.

While these assaults on agents are federal criminal offenses, the protocol is not in place to adequately protect the agents. The House language develops a clear process reporting incidents, protocol for handling assaultive passengers, passenger education program and passenger service agent training. It requires that each carrier, within 90 days of enactment, submit a plan to the FAA Administrator. These provisions will greatly enhance protections for passenger service agents from airport rage.

**The Communications Workers of America strongly support the House language on flight attendant rest time and passenger service agent assault protections. We urge the Senate to include these provisions in the Senate FAA Reauthorization bill.**