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ATC PRIVATIZATION BRINGS FEW SAVINGS, THREATENS GENERAL AVIATION SERVICES

EAA opposes AIRR Act heading to House floor, urges members to contact Congress

EAA AVIATION CENTER, OSHKOSH, Wisconsin — (February 18, 2016) — The Experimental Aircraft Association is urging its members to contact their congressional representatives and express opposition to provisions in the Aviation Innovation, Reform and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act that separate the nation's air traffic control system from the Federal Aviation Administration to be managed and operated by a not-for-profit, non-government entity. The legislation (H.R. 4441) passed the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on Feb. 11 and may be headed to the full House floor for a vote by the end of next week.

"Let's lay out the facts on this: moving to a privatized ATC system would not increase efficiency or safety, nor would it save any significant money," said Jack J. Pelton, EAA CEO/chairman. "What it would do is create an additional aviation bureaucracy, since FAA would still remain, and also create a government-approved monopoly on air traffic services that is dominated by airlines and commercial aviation interests. This will hurt the safest and most complex aviation system in the world, which is why EAA is unequivocally opposed."

Among the foreseen negative consequences of privatized ATC services for general aviation:

- **Few promised savings or efficiency improvements:** All existing labor contracts, equipment, and overhead costs are fully transferred to the ATC corporation.
- **Likely increase in costs:** Two bureaucracies will become necessary: The FAA remains and retains rulemaking and safety oversight. Meanwhile, the ATC corporation will have its own structure, while also being open to unlimited liability that will increase costs through insurance premiums, legal defense, judgments and settlements.
- **Airline dominance of ATC governance:** Airlines will have overwhelming political and financial influence, and have no incentive or desire to underwrite GA needs. The airspace is a national asset, similar to interstate highways, which must be operated for the interests of all users.
- **GA will lose services over time:** With few cost savings and continual pressure for airlines to increase profits, the place to reduce costs is to cut services that do not contribute to airline profits. Thus, GA loses airspace access, ATC services, and funding for rural airports, charting, and flight services, among others.
- **Loss of government oversight:** Congress and FAA have been the arbiters of fair access to use the national airspace system. In this plan, those decisions would rest in the hands of private interests dominated by airlines' self-interest and profit motive.

"It's noteworthy that the only two general aviation pilots on the House transportation committee – both Republicans – voted against this bill because they understand the ramifications," Pelton said. "Those in the GA community who think this is only about user fees should stop and think again. There will be no turning back. This will permanently change the access and freedom of the nations' airspace for general aviation. That's why all general aviation pilots and supporters should contact their elected representatives on this immediately."

EAA members can find contact information and send correspondence to their House and Senate representatives through EAA's Rally Congress online portal at <http://govt.eaa.org/>.

About EAA

EAA embodies the spirit of aviation through the world's most engaged community of aviation enthusiasts. EAA's 190,000 members and 900 local chapters enjoy the fun and camaraderie of sharing their passion for flying, building and restoring recreational aircraft. For more information on EAA and its programs, call 800-JOIN-EAA (800-564-6322) or go to www.eaa.org. For continual news updates, connect with www.twitter.com/EAA.