

# Act Now to Prevent Privatization of the Air Traffic Control System

## Oppose H.R. 2997, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AIRR Act



The number one aviation issue in Washington continues to be the FAA reauthorization bill, H.R. 2997, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AIRR Act, and its proposal to privatize the nation's air traffic control system. Members of Congress want to hear from airports and aviation businesses in their districts before voting on the legislation in September, making it critical that you engage with lawmakers. Make your views known using the talking points below and "Myths and Facts" resource on the reverse.

Contact your Member of Congress, through:

- Telephone: industry advocacy hotline, 833-GAVoice (833-428-6423)
- Email and social media: NATA's Legislative Action Center, [www.nata.aero/actioncenter](http://www.nata.aero/actioncenter)
- In-person facility tour and meeting with your elected officials

## Talking Points for Communicating Your Opposition to H.R. 2997

### **Introduce Your Airport and Business**

Tell your Member of Congress or their staff about your business, the services you provide, and particularly the number of people you employ. Airports and aviation businesses create good paying jobs in communities and are a vital part of an airport's contribution to the local economy.

The Alliance for Aviation Across America ([www.aviationacrossamerica.org](http://www.aviationacrossamerica.org)) provides state-by-state statistics to help make your case.

### **Modernization not privatization**

- The general aviation industry believes targeted reforms for the FAA that, short of privatization, will continue to support the world's safest and most efficient aviation system including:
  - Sequestration – Remove ATC operations and NextGen modernization from interruptions caused by government shutdowns or sequestration requirements.
  - Biennial Congressional Budgeting – Allows for a predictable and stable funding stream for FAA operations and ATC modernization.
  - Facility Consolidation and Improvement – Mandate the FAA consolidate outdated and unneeded facilities and equipment, and improve needed facilities across the country.

### **A solution in search of a problem**

- Proponents of ATC privatization are saying anything to convince Members of Congress to support the proposal.
  - They claim it will allow for direct routings of flights – We've been doing that for 17 years.
  - They claim it will move us away from the current 1960s radar-based ATC system and allow us to deploy a GPS one. That system is already built and deployed. It's called ADS-B, and the only hold-up is equipage, particularly by the airlines.

### **H.R. 2997 poses grave risks to general aviation**

- Proponents of privatization also assert that GA is protected in H.R. 2997 by board representation and a provision titled "rights of access." GA is hardly protected.
  - The board is a red herring – The ATC corporation created by the legislation is funded exclusively by airlines. It's governed by a board of special interests whose fiduciary responsibilities **are not** to those that appointed them (like business aviation) but "solely and exclusively to the corporation."
    - ✦ In that construct, it is difficult to envision continued investment in a national airspace system that benefits all Americans, but rather one that shrinks investment to meet only the needs of those funding the corporation – the airlines.
  - The rights of access are smoke and mirrors – It is not an improvement over the current system of "first come, first served." It protects access, but not necessarily timely or equal access.
    - ✦ Eventually, it will require GA to lawyer up. Since most Part 135 operators have one or two planes and have less than 20 employees, it's unlikely they will be able to afford the lawyers to protect their rights.

# Myths and Facts Surrounding Air Traffic Control Privatization

One of the biggest challenges facing general aviation is overcoming various assertions made by supporters of ATC privatization that through deliberate, endless repetition, can become "facts" to policymakers. If left unchallenged, these dubious facts can create a groundswell of support for a user-fee funded air traffic control system.

Myth: Rural America will benefit from the creation of an air traffic control corporation.

**Fact: Low density areas will see reduced aviation investments from a privatized air traffic control corporation.**

Myth: A diverse board of directors representing all aviation stakeholders guarantees fairness.

**Fact: Turning over the public airspace to a group of special interests will not protect general aviation and is not fair to the traveling public.**

Myth: The current budget process is inadequate to meeting the funding needs of air traffic control.

**Fact: Since 2008, Congress has funded air traffic control functions at over 99% of the requested amount.**

Myth: The public will be represented despite taking Congress out of the decision-making process.

**Fact: Congress has no ability to intervene with a privatized ATC corporation on behalf of the public.**

Myth: The current ATC system is based on 1960s radar technology.

**Fact: The ADS-B system is deployed and ready, the airlines simply need to equip.**

Myth: Privatizing the ATC system makes sense because a lot of countries do it.

**Fact: The size of these foreign systems and the level of investment are significantly smaller than the U.S. system.**

Myth: Airline delays are caused by outdated technology.

**Fact: The FAA's technology and ATC are not the main causes for passenger delays. The airlines themselves and weather account for 80% of delays.**