

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-3)
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**Hearing On
Critical Lapses in FAA Safety Oversight of Airlines: Abuses of Regulatory
Partnership Programs
April 3, 2008**

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Thank you Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica for holding this hearing to discuss the findings of the committee's oversight investigation of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) failure to exercise the required oversight of the airline industry. Also, I want to thank both Mr. Boutris and Mr. Peters for assisting the committee in its investigation. With your assistance we have been able to bring attention to the FAA's ineffectiveness in performing their important responsibilities.

I believe all my colleagues share my concern that the committee's oversight investigation has found that the Southwest Airlines incident is not unique, rather to a pattern of regulatory abuse by the FAA. As I travel back and forth between St. Louis and Washington, DC I would like to believe the planes I fly are one-hundred percent safe and nothing less. However, the committee's investigation has made it clear each of us should think twice before we board our planes to fly home.

The committee's investigation has made clear that the need for the FAA to rethink its reliance on airlines to voluntarily disclose safety issues because of repeated examples of leniency in enforcing safety regulations. I am deeply concerned that when both Mr. Boutris and Mr. Peters brought concerns to their supervisors that Southwest Airlines was flying planes overdue for inspection that these planes were not grounded until needed inspections were completed. Instead, their supervisors assisted Southwest Airlines cover this up and went on to threaten both Mr. Boutris and Mr. Peters for doing their job.

In closing, I am hopeful both the FAA and the airline industry will take away from the evidence raised by the committee's investigation the importance of making significant improvements to the FAA's oversight responsibilities to guarantee the safety of the flying public. Again, I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for holding this hearing.

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