

Shuster drops push to privatize air traffic control

Luis Sanchez, TheHill | FEB 27, 2018

Source: <http://thehill.com/policy/transportation/375931-shuster-drops-push-to-privatize-air-traffic-control>



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House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman [Bill Shuster](#) (R-Pa.) is dropping his effort to separate air traffic control from the federal government.

“Despite an unprecedented level of support for this legislation – from bipartisan lawmakers, industry, and conservative groups and labor groups alike – some of my own colleagues refused to support shrinking the federal government by 35,000 employees, cutting taxes, and stopping wasteful spending,” Shuster wrote in a statement.

The [proposed legislation](#), which was unveiled by Shuster back in June and which the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved in a 32-25 vote last year, would have shifted control of the country’s air navigation system to a private nonprofit organization over three years. The system would have been controlled by a board of directors that would have the power to impose user fees.

The drastic change would have removed more than 30,000 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees from the federal payroll.

The proposal was opposed by the Senate — which had proposed their own long-term FAA bill that kept the air traffic control in government hands — and most Democrats, but it saw some hope for passage after [President Trump](#) expressed support for privatizing the air traffic control.

Trump has been reported to have pushed for his longtime pilot to head the FAA.

“Although our air traffic control reform provisions did not reach the obvious level of support needed to pass Congress, I intend to work with Senator [John] Thune [R-S.D.] and move forward with a reauthorization bill to provide long-term stability for the FAA,” Shuster said.

The FAA’s legal authority expires at the end of September.

Shuster Signals End to ATC Privatization Battle

Matt Thurber, AINonline | FEB 27, 2018

Source: <https://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/general-aviation/2018-02-27/shuster-signals-end-atc-privatization-battle-0>

In a terse press release issued late today, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pennsylvania) appeared to drop his once-strong push for privatization of the U.S. air traffic control (ATC) system. He admitted in the statement that the proposed reform of ATC in H.R.2997 “did not reach the obvious level of support needed to pass Congress,” and he will now work with his colleagues on a reauthorization bill “to provide long-term stability for the FAA.”

“We built strong support for this critical reform over the last two congresses, and we had a golden opportunity to move beyond the status quo and accomplish positive, transformational change with this bill,” Shuster said. “Despite an unprecedented level of support for this legislation—from bipartisan lawmakers, industry, and conservative groups and labor groups alike—some of my own colleagues refused to support shrinking the federal government by 35,000 employees, cutting taxes, and stopping wasteful spending.”

NBAA president and CEO Ed Bolen sent a message to members last night: “From the statement, it appears that as a result of the outstanding work of NBAA's board, Associate Member Advisory Committee, Leadership Council, membership and staff—as well as a chorus of opposition from a diverse, informed and united coalition—the airlines' effort with regard to ATC privatization will not go forward as part of the FAA reauthorization process.

“We are profoundly grateful for everyone who has made their voice heard on this critical issue. Now, it is time to focus our full attention on a long-term FAA bill that ensures the U.S. has the world's best air transportation system for decades to come,” Bolen concluded.

ATC Privatization Derailed

Russ Niles, AvWeb | FEB 28, 2018

Source: <https://www.avweb.com/eletter/archives/101/3948-full.html?ET=avweb:e3948:2094371a:&st=email#230373>

Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., has announced he is no longer pursuing the separation of air traffic control from the FAA. After a couple of attempts and massive opposition from hundreds of groups with a stake in aviation, Shuster, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman, conceded Tuesday his bill doesn’t have the support to pass. “Despite an unprecedented level of support for this legislation – from bipartisan lawmakers, industry, and conservative groups and labor groups alike – some of my own colleagues refused to support shrinking the federal government by 35,000 employees, cutting taxes, and stopping wasteful spending,” Shuster wrote in a statement. Instead, he said he’ll work toward long-term funding for the FAA in a proper reauthorization bill.

Shuster proposed moving air traffic control to a nonprofit corporation run by a board of directors that most in general aviation believed would be dominated by airline interests. The initiative also had the support of President Donald Trump but Shuster could not muster enough congressional support. AOPA was the first to react and while President Mark Baker acknowledged the massive lobbying effort that helped kill Shuster's bill, he also pledged support for Shuster's call for stable funding for the FAA. "We look forward to working with Chairman Shuster and other leaders in Congress on a bill that improves aviation for every American and ensures our skies remain the safest in the world," Baker said.

NBAA Welcomes Removal of ATC Privatization Provision from House FAA Bill

NBAA | FEB 28, 2018

Source: http://www.aviationpros.com/press_release/12400614/nbaa-welcomes-removal-of-atc-privatization-provision-from-house-faa-bill

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) today issued the following statement in response to the Feb. 27 announcement from House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-9-PA) to set aside his proposal for removing air traffic control (ATC) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The proposal was part of House legislation (H.R. 2997) to reauthorize funding and programs for the FAA.

"We are profoundly grateful for everyone who has made their voice heard on this critical issue, including NBAA's members and the entire general aviation community, as well as a chorus of opposition from a diverse, informed and united coalition.

"The many members of Congress who carefully considered this issue, listened to concerns from their constituents, and ultimately stood with the general aviation community should also be applauded.

"The general aviation community came together like never before, and clearly told Congress that handing over our nation's ATC system to an airline-dominated board is a risk we simply cannot take – everyone should be proud of this significant effort.

"As we all know, long-term reauthorization of the FAA, and the continuing modernization of the nation's aviation system, is a national priority, one we all share. We are profoundly grateful that Chairman Shuster has responded to the concerns that have been raised over his proposal, by a large and diverse group of organizations and individuals.

"We look forward to working with the chairman and other congressional transportation leaders on both sides of Capitol Hill, on a bipartisan basis, to advance a long-term FAA reauthorization package that serves all Americans, and ensures the U.S. has the world's best air transportation system for decades to come. Now is the time to focus our full attention on a long-term FAA bill that continues advancing the modernization efforts that are already improving our ATC system."

Ding, dong, the ATC "privatization" push is dead (for now)

Jazz Shaw, HotAir.com | FEB 28, 2018



We've spent more than our fair share of time here discussing the proposal to “privatize” air traffic control (ATC) functions in the United States. The plan, which would remove ATC oversight from the FAA and turn it over to some new entity comprised mainly of commercial airline lobbyists and their unions, was pushed largely by Pennsylvania Congressman Bill Shuster and endorsed by President Trump. Now Shuster is retiring and the President appears to have moved on to other matters and [the plan is officially being abandoned](#). (The Hill)

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) is dropping his effort to separate air traffic control from the federal government.

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The proposed legislation, which was unveiled by Shuster back in June and which the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved in a 32-25 vote last year, would have shifted control of the country’s air navigation system to a private nonprofit organization over three years. The system would have been controlled by a board of directors that would have the power to impose user fees...

“Although our air traffic control reform provisions did not reach the obvious level of support needed to pass Congress, I intend to work with Senator [John] Thune [R-S.D.] and move forward with a reauthorization bill to provide long-term stability for the FAA,” Shuster said.

Well, I don't know about any “*unprecedented level of support*” for this plan. Polling on the issue was sparse at best and given all of the other hot topics being debated, a significant part of the country had never even heard of it. The biggest “support” I saw came primarily from Airlines for America, the lobbying group supporting the commercial airlines, plus their associated unions. But at least the subject is going away for a while.

The day may come when we can attempt something like this. I'm still a big fan of privatization wherever it's practical and profitable to do so. And while it's a highly technical and complex field, the private sector probably could do a better job of it than any group of Washington bureaucrats. But if we're going to do it, it should be a truly independent organization built by specialists in the field, not corporate lobbyists and labor unions. That's just a recipe for disaster.

For now, however, we're going to need to just muddle on as we have been and wait for a more viable proposal to come along. In the meantime, if you really want to work on fixing something to do with air travel, why don't you get to work investigating why the coach fare airline seats are now approximately the size of a Saltine cracker?

Trump proposal to privatize air traffic control lacks support

The chairman of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said on Tuesday there is not enough support in Congress to move forward with a plan backed by President Donald Trump to privatize the air traffic control system.

David Shepardson, Reuters | FEB 28, 2018

Source: <https://www.politicususa.com/2018/02/28/trump-proposal-privatize-air-traffic-control-lacks-support-key-congressman.html>



WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The chairman of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said on Tuesday there is not enough support in Congress to move forward with a plan backed by President Donald Trump to privatize the air traffic control system.

Republican Representative Bill Shuster said in a statement that the “air traffic control reform provisions did not reach the obvious level of support needed to pass Congress.”

But Shuster vowed to work with the Senate to move forward with legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, which expires at the end of March. Without authorization the FAA would not be able to collect aviation taxes and many of its employees would have to be laid off.

In June, Trump unveiled a plan to privatize air traffic control in what he said would modernize the system and lower flying costs.

Democrats contended it would hand control of a key asset to special interests and big airlines, and some Republicans opposed it.

On Tuesday, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, along with nearly 250 general aviation organizations, state and local aviation officials, labor unions, consumer groups and airports said they had sent a letter to congressional leaders vowing to oppose any effort to privatize air traffic control.

United Airlines , Hawaiian Airlines Inc [HAILUL], American Airlines and Southwest Airlines Co, all represented by the Airlines for America lobbying group, backed the plan.

Under the proposal, air traffic control would be spun off from the FAA and put under the oversight of a nonprofit corporation.

The FAA spends nearly \$10 billion a year on air traffic control funded largely through passenger user fees, and has spent more than \$7.5 billion on next-generation air traffic control reforms in recent years.

Trump has said current air traffic reform efforts have failed and were a “total waste of money.”

Opponents said the U.S. system is so large that privatization would not save money, and would drive up ticket costs and could create a national security risk. Opponents also say technology upgrades would be sidetracked while the private entity was set up, potentially adding years to awarding contracts.