NATCA APPLAUDS HOUSE INTROUDUCTION OF SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT

Critical Legislation Will Require FAA to Improve Transparency in its Controller Workforce Plan and Hire New Air Traffic Controllers at Maximum Levels to Address Staffing Crisis

(WASHINGTON) – The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) applauds the introduction of the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act in the U.S. House of Representatives, which will be considered the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Tuesday morning. This legislation would enact real solutions to the challenging issues that face the National Airspace System (NAS) including air traffic controller staffing, which has not kept pace with the demands of an expanding and evolving NAS.

NATCA thanks T&I Committee Chair Sam Graves (Mo.), T&I Committee Ranking Member Rick Larsen (Wash.), Aviation Subcommittee Chair Garret Graves (La.), and Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Cohen (Tenn.) for their leadership and timely introduction of this important legislation.

"The most critical issue facing the NAS is the staffing, hiring, and training of air traffic controllers," said NATCA President Rich Santa. "The Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act would require the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to revise its long-flawed Controller Workforce Plan and to set its hiring target for new air traffic controller trainees to the maximum number able to be trained at the FAA's Academy in Oklahoma City, while continuing to hiring experienced controllers, for each of fiscal years 2024-2027. This is an essential step in what must be a comprehensive approach to improving controller staffing throughout the system."

Over the last decade, the total number of fully certified professional controllers (CPCs) and the total controller workforce, including those in training to become air traffic controllers, have not kept up with attrition. There are nearly 1,200 fewer CPCs today than there were 10 years ago.

The bill also would require improvements to FAA's safety systems and integrates new users into the NAS, while ensuring the air traffic controllers who ensure the safety and efficiency of the system are involved in these initiatives.

"This legislation will go a long way to moving the FAA and the NAS forward into the future," Santa said.

NATCA will continue working with the T&I Committee to improve the legislation as it moves forward through the legislative process.

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