



J. Scott Kirby
Chief Executive Officer

April 26, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graves:

On behalf of United Airlines, I write to express strong support for the additional funding you have proposed as part of the budget reconciliation bill to support improvements to our nation's air traffic control (ATC) system at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The single most important thing the government can do to improve the travel experience for the American flying public is to revitalize our nation's ATC system. Our nation's aviation system should lead the world in safety, innovation, and efficiency.

We greatly appreciate President Trump and Transportation Secretary Duffy's leadership in highlighting the need to address ATC staffing, provide long-term funding for facilities, and modernize the technology used by controllers. The funding that you are proposing will serve as a critical down payment and significant first step towards the Trump Administration's strategic plan to comprehensively improve the ATC system.

Updating our aging ATC facilities and information technology is essential to our nation's competitiveness in aviation. As the FAA has stated, 92 percent of ATC funding goes towards sustaining outdated facilities and technology, leaving almost no resources for strategic, modern investments. The average age of FAA facilities is over 40 years old and many are much older. Controllers are still using paper strips in the tower and computer systems supported by floppy disks. In January 2023, the NOTAM system that informs pilots of flight plans failed, causing the first nationwide grounding since 2001. According to the FAA, outdated ATC technology systems are experiencing hundreds of outages per week.

Chronic staffing shortages have also posed a major risk to air travel. In 2023, the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Transportation found that 77 percent of the most critical ATC facilities across the nation were below staffing targets. In November 2024, during our busiest holiday travel period, more than 400,000 United customers in Newark faced delays and cancellations due to ATC facility staffing shortages. Delays and cancellations are the biggest pain point for our customers, resulting in missed business meetings, family vacations, and important personal milestones. They also harm our economy: according to FAA research, in 2019, flight delays cost the economy, including for passengers, nearly \$33 billion.

As the world's largest airline, United is continuing to grow, create good paying jobs, and connect communities across the United States to each other and to the rest of the world. To continue to achieve our success, a technologically advanced and reliable ATC system is essential.

Thank you again for your leadership in supporting additional funding for ATC. We look forward to working with the Committee on this and other priorities that will advance aviation safety, innovation, and customer service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Matt Kij", written in a cursive style.