

March 26, 2019
Member Day Hearing
THUD

Testimony of U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew

- Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and Members of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee, I thank you for the opportunity you have given me today to speak on behalf of the over 1,400 men and women at the William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic City who keep our skies safe and who I am deeply proud to represent in congress.
- I represent New Jersey's 2nd congressional district which encompasses a large swath of the state's land mass and is known for its biodiversity, beaches, fisheries, and tourism-based economy.
- The Tech Center is the Federation Aviation Administration's national scientific test base for

the research, development, test, and evaluation of air transportation systems.

- The research, testing and prototype development conducted by Tech Center staff helps shape the future of our nation's air transportation system.
- In short, it is the nation's premier air transportation system federal laboratory.
- The Technical Center has a number of unique laboratories engaged in research that contributes to aviation system development: air traffic management laboratories, simulation facilities, a human factors laboratory, the NextGen Integration and Evaluation Capability, a Cockpit Simulation Facility, a fleet of specially-instrumented in-flight test aircraft, the world's largest full-scale aviation fire test facility, a chemistry laboratory for analyzing the toxicity of materials involved in a fire, surveillance laboratories, a full-scale aircraft structural test evaluation and research facility, the National

Airport Pavement Test Facility and an Unmanned Aircraft Systems research and development simulation laboratory.

- The Tech Center is the heart of an aviation cluster that is unparalleled – a lot of the work at the Tech Center is done in partnership with academic, private, and public entities such as NASA, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Marshalls, and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- I hope the Subcommittee supports robust funding for the Tech Center Laboratory Facility, Laboratory Sustainment, NextGen and Operations Planning, NextGen Support Portfolio, and Fire Research and Safety, among others.
- Finally, I oppose the administration’s attempt to require Tech Center employees to fork out more of their own money for their retirement plans.

- Public service is a calling for Tech Center employees, they are proud to contribute to the safety, security and competitiveness of their country and oftentimes give up a much more substantial salary that they could have commanded in the private sector.
- When the government breaks its commitment, it sends an unmistakable signal.
- The recent 35-day government shutdown, the longest in our nation's history, really hurt morale at the Tech Center as 971 employees were furloughed and 449 were asked to work without pay.
- Critical projects were significantly delayed.
- Tech Center employees, like many federal employees, simply do not trust the federal government to keep its end of the bargain

anymore and may choose to take their expertise elsewhere.

- I implore the Subcommittee to reject these onerous cuts to Tech Center workers and again, I ask that the Subcommittee support robust funding for all programs and operations at the William J. Hughes Technical Center.
- I thank the Subcommittee for its time and look forward to with all of you to ensure the safety of our skies.