

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Full Committee Mark-Up

H.R. 4489, *the “FAA Leadership In Groundbreaking High-Tech Research and Development Act” (FLIGHT R&D Act)*

February 11, 2016

Thank you, Chairman Smith. Mr. Chairman, I had hoped that today we could have a nice bipartisan markup. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like that will be the case.

I'd like to review how we got to this point. On Monday afternoon, my staff received the Majority's bill being marked up today. After reviewing the bill, I directed my staff to reach out to the Majority to determine if some kind of bipartisan compromise could be reached for today's markup.

Our staffs discussed changes to the bill on Tuesday, and on Wednesday morning an agreement was reached on changes to the bill which would have led to my support of the bill at today's markup. We memorialized those changes in an amendment, which I would offer, and the Majority staff confirmed their support for this plan yesterday afternoon.

However, at 6:43 p.m., yesterday evening, we were provided with 8 new Republican amendments, the substance of which had not been discussed with my staff during negotiations. Several of these amendments were immediately recognized by my staff as being amendments which I could not support.

Now, I have a suspicion that these amendments were drafted by Majority staff and provided to their Members.

However, even if they weren't conceived of by Majority staff, they clearly would have known about these amendments while we were negotiating in good faith with the Majority to reach a bipartisan compromise. Note that the date and time stamps on the amendments indicate that many of these amendments were drafted within a two hour period on Monday the 8th.

For the Majority to have been working on these amendments at the same time we were negotiating in good faith towards a compromise is, to put it bluntly, bad faith.

Now, the Majority also decided to schedule this markup at a time which would coincide with the Transportation Committee's markup of the main FAA reauthorization, despite the fact that 4 of our Members sit on that Committee, including myself. We have known for the past year that we needed to markup an FAA R&D bill. We could have done this months ago, instead of spending the Committee's time on partisan political hearings, and now we are trying to jam this bill through this afternoon.

Frankly, if the Majority is going to negotiate in bad faith with the Minority, if you are going to sandbag us with poison pill amendments at the eleventh hour, and you are going to knowingly inconvenience

Members with markup conflicts, then I don't really feel the Minority needs to be a part of this process. I'll head back over to the Transportation Committee where at least we get a fair markup.

I yield back.