

April 14, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rick Larsen Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on policy priorities for the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. In the FAA we should focus on all the workers who keep our aviation system running: from pilots to flight attendants to air traffic controllers to custodians and luggage workers. In my testimony, I want especially to focus on those workers who are most often left behind: airport service workers.

These workers are our constituents, and in my largely working-class district, my constituents work for the San Antonio Airport, the Austin Airport, the San Marcos airport, and many others and are key to moving millions of people in and out of Texas every year.

They keep airports safe, clean and running smoothly even through a global pandemic, climate disasters, and busy travel seasons. All airport workers, whether you're flying a plane, work in aviation safety, or are making sure passengers with disabilities can navigate the airport, **deserve a living wage, healthcare, and paid time off to spend with their families.**

Let's face it: we've seen how our air travel systems are fragile, and the only thing that has held it all together are our workers.

Without our wheelchair attendants, elderly passengers and people with disabilities wouldn't be able to navigate the airport with dignity.

Without our cabin cleaners and janitors, we wouldn't have the clean and sanitary facilities that we all expect.

Instead of fixing problems, too often companies are cutting corners and jacking up prices — while leaving passengers and workers to deal with the mess.

It doesn't have to be this way. And it's up to us to do something about it — for workers, for passengers, and for the taxpayers who fund this system.

States, localities, and airport authorities across the country have already adopted wage and benefits standards, but there are a number of major airports with no minimum standards other than the minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. That's shameful. That's why I'm proud that at the Austin airport in my district we have set \$20/hour as a bare minimum for workers, whether you work in concessions, custodial or customer service. If we want a top-notch national air travel system, we need *national* wage and benefit standards for these taxpayer-funded airports.

I want to share the story of a fellow Texan: Dorian Johnson is a Passenger Service Agent at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. He works 40 hours a week helping passengers with disabilities navigate

the airport and get to their destination. Despite how essential his job is, *Dorian has no affordable healthcare, no paid vacation, and no paid sick time.*

Let that sink in. Airport workers at one of the largest airports in the world can't see a doctor when they're sick or take a day off to get well. We must do better than this.

The proposed HR 1499, the Good Jobs for Good Airports Act, sponsored by my dear colleague and T&I Committee Member, Rep Chuy Garcia, will set national wage and benefits levels at major airports that receive federal funding. It will ensure that every airport job is a good job with a liveable wage and benefits.

For my state, this will be huge. It will improve jobs for at least 37,000 Texans. People like Dorian Johnson will have a decent wage, affordable healthcare, and paid days off.

Alongside including the standards in Good Jobs Good Airports, we can ensure there's adequate training for our pilots, safety for our flight attendants and air traffic controllers, and good paying jobs with a right to organize for all workers at our airports. The FAA Reauthorization bill is a chance for us to create safer and more reliable transportation for our constituents by recognizing the contributions of aviation workers, especially those who often work the hardest job for the lowest pay.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Casar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

GREG CASAR
UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE