



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

April 14, 2016
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY
Senate Substitute Amendment to H.R. 636 – Federal Aviation Administration
Reauthorization Act of 2016
(Sen. Thune, R-SD, and Sen. Nelson, D-FL)

The Administration appreciates the Senate's bipartisan effort to advance an aviation reauthorization bill. In the past, the Congress has managed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through a series of short-term patches, creating significant uncertainty for the FAA and undermining the agency's ability to make long-term capital investments and plan for the future. Though the Administration believes that eighteen months do not provide the long-term certainty that the FAA needs to advance on its critical priorities, the Administration appreciates that the bill is intended to enable a longer-term dialogue about the future of our aviation system.

The Administration's priorities for a long-term aviation reauthorization bill include the need to ensure safety, serve the public interest, modernize the air traffic control system, and better align aviation resources with the needs of the National Airspace (NAS). The bill contains some provisions that advance these priorities. However, it also includes provisions that would undermine the FAA's ability to address critical challenges, like mandating controller hiring preferences and limiting FAA's ability to make business-like decisions about its services.

There are also a number of provisions within the bill that need to be improved, particularly as it relates to safety, security, and the environment. For example, with regards to safety, while the Administration shares Congress' goal of fast and efficient integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the NAS, the FAA must be able to maintain regulatory flexibility. The bill would direct the Department of Transportation to develop certification standards for small UAS so that companies could engage in the widespread transportation of property two years from passage. This kind of overly prescriptive means of integrating UAS using legislation would disrupt the ongoing rulemaking process. From a security perspective, the bill would require the Transportation Security Administration to establish screening and other measures at certain small airports, meaning the agency would be required to reallocate staff and equipment from higher-risk, higher-need facilities. The bill also includes provisions related to air tours over national parks, which could negatively impact the visitor experience and protection of park natural resources.

The bill also should do more with regards to infrastructure investment. For the past seven years, the Administration has called on the Congress to provide flexibility to airports to invest in a stronger aviation system. This bill misses an opportunity to improve airport infrastructure by not allowing for adjustments to Passenger Facility Charges in tandem with reforms to the Airport Improvement Program.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to pass an FAA reauthorization

bill that strengthens our aviation system, improves safety, and maintains the leadership of the U.S. in global aviation.

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