



December 6, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Democratic Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

In the interest of over 100,000 U.S. Flight Attendants, I am writing to request your immediate attention to a critical trade issue that threatens to jettison over 300,000 good U.S. jobs. The U.S. Department of Transportation wrongly approved a foreign air carrier permit for Norwegian Air International (NAI), on Friday, December 2, 2016.

Specific labor protections were negotiated in the U.S.- E.U. Open Skies Agreement to prohibit an NAI-type business model. Article 17 *bis* clearly states that the Agreement is not to undermine labor rights in either country and there are benefits to open markets with "high labour [sic] standards." However, NAI, a Norwegian based corporation, has set up a shell company in Ireland in order to capitalize on Ireland's less restrictive labor laws while arrogantly flouting Norway's strong worker protections that would no longer apply. The Department of Transportation approved this permit by casting aside the high labor standards of Article 17 *bis* that were central to the negotiations of the Agreement.

Norwegian can fly to the U.S. today under the Open Skies Agreement; it does not need this permit for NAI in order to compete. The Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) is aligned with the U.S.-based and Norwegian-based crews who fly today under U.S. and Norwegian labor law. But NAI's 'flag of convenience' model is the same scheme that destroyed U.S. shipping and along with it 100,000 American jobs. Others will follow this practice to shop for the lowest labor and safety standards around the world, much like the Liberian or other foreign flags flying above the ships in U.S. ports.

This is a betrayal to aviation workers across the United States. Aviation was born in the U.S. and built faithfully by the workers who make our airlines fly. Flight Attendants, Pilots, Mechanics, Ramp Service, Agents and thousands of workers who support aviation have fought hard for good U.S. jobs, the highest standards of aviation safety and security, the critical service to each of our small communities and the networks that allow the United States direct connection to the rest of the world. We have sacrificed and our families have been hurt to keep our airlines flying and our nation in business. These are the people the administration is double-crossing.

If action is not taken quickly we will be witness to a radical shift in the aviation industry where foreign interests dominate the U.S. marketplace, but keep their money overseas and out of the hands of American workers. American skies must be subject to American safety standards and to the high level of American cockpit and crew standards. Bipartisan legislation already exists with significant support. We are calling on your leadership to take action before it's too late.

Sincerely,

Sara Nelson, International President